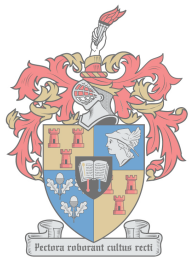
DIVERSITY IN AN ACADEMIC LITERACY CURRICULUM: THE CASE OF FIRST-YEAR BSc EXTENDED DEGREE PROGRAMME STUDENTS AT A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

By

MAGDALENE LESO



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Supervisor: Professor BL Frick

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DECLARATION

By submitting this research report electronically, I, Tshidi Leso, declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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ABSTRACT

The transition from high school to university is not easy for students in general. It is particularly difficult for second language speakers of English as they often speak other languages at home. In addition, often their exposure to English is mainly in the classroom. As a result, many South African universities have invested in Academic Literacy programmes to provide students with tertiary academic skills. The university where this study was conducted is one of the higher education institutions in South Africa that use mainly English as the medium of instruction, even though many of the students entering the BSc extended four-year programme are second or even third language English speakers who may not have the language competency level required to successfully navigate through academic curricula. In the extended four-year programme, the academic literacy module is Language and Study Skills, which focuses on enhancing students' competence in mainly academic reading and writing. This study investigated academic literacy teaching and learning practices in a linguistically diverse classroom. The perceptions of the BSc first-year four-year extended degree programme students and lecturers were explored to gain insight into their experiences of the academic literacy classroom. The findings provide insights on how, if at all, the Language and Study Skills module content and the learning and teaching strategies accommodate the linguistic diversity of the different students.

Keywords: second language, first language, students; lecturers, linguistic diversity; higher education; curriculum

OPSOMMING

Die oorgang van sekondêre na tersiêre onderwys is in die algemeen nie maklik nie, veral nie vir nie-moedertaalsprekers van Engels wat meestal ander tale tuis praat. Verder word hulle dikwels slegs aan Engels in die klaskamer blootgestel. Gevolglik het baie Suid-Afrikaanse universiteite in akademiese geletterdheidsprogramme belê om studente met die vereiste akademiese vaardighede toe te rus. Hierdie studie is by een van die hoër opvoedkundige instellings in Suid-Afrika gedoen waar Engels die amptelike taal is, alhoewel baie studente wat die BSc verlengde vierjaar program neem Engels as ‘n eerste addisionele of ‘n tweede addisionele taal magtig is; die implikasie is dat baie studente nie oor die nodige taalvermoë beskik om die akademiese kurrikulum suksesvol af te handel nie. In die BSc verlengde vierjaar program is die akademiese geletterdheidsprogram die Taal- en Studievaardighede module wat op die studente se akademiese lees- en skryfvaardighede fokus. Hierdie studie ondersoek akademiese geletterdheidsonderrig- en leerpraktyke in ‘n linguistiese diverse klaskamer. Die persepsies van die BSc eerstejaarstudente in die vier jaar verlengde program word in diepte verken om insig in hulle ervaring van die akademiese geletterdheidsprogram te verkry. Die bevindinge verskaf insig in die wyse waarop die inhoud en die onderrigstrategieë die linguistiese diversiteit van die verskillende studente akkommodeer.

Kernwoorde: addisionele taal, eerste taal, studente; lektore, linguistieke diversiteit; hoër onderwys; kurrikulum

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BICS: Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills

BSc: Bachelor of Science

CALP: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

CHE: Council on Higher Education

DoE: Department of Education

DHET: Department of Higher Education and Training

ESL: English Second Language

HEQF: Higher Education Qualification Framework

L1: First Language

L2: Second language

MoI: Medium of Instruction

NQF: National Qualifications Framework

OBE: Outcomes Based Education

SA: South Africa

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

There has been a general concern articulated in institutions of higher learning about the academic preparedness of first-year students entering universities. This concern is primarily precipitated by the growing number of students who struggle with competence in reading and writing for academic purposes (Archer, 2010; Makoni, 2010). Learners who do not speak English as their first language are often being taught and assessed in English. Not only do these learners have to grapple with learning new and advanced subject matter as they proceed through school and university, but also with learning the subject matter in a different language to their mother tongue. Many students are "inadequately equipped to engage successfully in the academic discourse" (Van Dyk, Zybrands, Cillie, & Coetzee, 2009:334) required of them in a particular subject. Additionally, tertiary education students struggle to cope with the demands placed on them in terms of reading and writing expectations for course work. The development of academic literacies is an essential graduate attribute for all students. Academic literacies play a significant role in learning and concept development. Research in South Africa has shown that students for whom English is an additional language face a much greater challenge with academic literacies (Leibowitz, 2004; Paxton, 2007).

One of the outcomes of the revisions of the South African higher education policy has been an augmentation of the diversity in the student cohort to include traditionally under-represented groups. This growth in student diversity has included educationally-disadvantaged students, typically second-language speakers of English, from South Africa and students from other African and Asian countries, are also English Second-Language (ESL) speakers. Students find the transition to academic literacy practices challenging, but changes in South African schooling, such as the 2009 National Senior Certificate with its lower baselines for passing matric and entering university, have meant that there is a greater diversity in language proficiency and preparedness for academic literacies (Van Rooy & Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2015). Along with the increasing inclusiveness of student populations at South African universities, there is the rapidly growing role of developmental academic literacy curricula. Such curricula are designed to address the challenges faced by students found to be under-prepared when assessed for university-level reading and writing, many of whom are ESL speakers. These challenges were identified by Leki and Carson (1994), who classified them into three types: language related skills (linguistic accuracy, i.e. grammar, vocabulary, spelling, etc.), research and information management skills (library research skills, gathering material, interpreting and selecting appropriate

content and referencing skills), and text-managing skills activities (brainstorming, planning, outlining, drafting, editing, proof-reading).

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) was challenged to respond systematically to the gap between students' matric completion and academic demands of higher-education programmes. This challenge was dealt with by the formation of a number of strategic objectives aimed at improving student throughput and graduation rates at universities. One of these objectives was to widen access at universities for previously disadvantaged communities. The government's intervention resulted in a proliferation of educational policies and curriculum documents aimed at restructuring universities, as well as fostering the social changes promised by the new political dispensation (Leibowitz, 2004; Mseleku, 2004). For example, the implementation of the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) curricula in 2005, the National Qualification Framework (NQF), as well as the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF), exemplify the post-1994 government's political will to address the challenges in schools and universities (Leibowitz, 2004; Scott, 2013). Furthermore, in August 2013 the Council on Higher Education (CHE) released, "A proposal for undergraduate curriculum reform in South Africa: a case for a flexible curriculum structure" (CHE, 2013). This report shows that South Africa's standard undergraduate educational process is not working effectively for a large proportion of the student body, particularly for first generation, socio-economically disadvantaged students. In particular, the traditional curriculum structures have been identified as being a major obstacle to learning.

The pressure on South African universities to transform and maintain high standards has had far-reaching implications for teaching and learning in general, and for student literacy practices, including academic writing. Currently universities deal with a contingent of students from previously marginalised and under-privileged communities, who are often not academically and emotionally prepared for higher education. This academic under-preparedness has affected their literacy practices and their overall academic development (Pineteh, 2013; Archer, 2010; Leibowitz, 2004). Van Schalkwyk (2008) states that, generally, students who are under-prepared for higher education perform poorly in their studies. Academic literacy has been found to be critical in fostering academic success (Yeld, 2003). Therefore, academic literacy is a key factor for such under-preparedness.

In light of the above factors, the university in this study undertook to establish support interventions and academic development programmes to improve throughput rates, as well as address the needs of academically under-prepared students. One of the interventions was the establishment of the Bachelor of Science (BSc) four-year extended degree programme in 2008. Language and Study Skills is one of the

modules introduced by the faculty to help prepare students for a degree in the sciences. The extended programme has lower entrance requirements and are designed for students who are not academically prepared, but who are willing to work hard to succeed and obtain their degree. The programmes include an additional year of study which will enhance students' basic knowledge and skills before progressing onto more specialist studies in the later years of the programmes. The first year is preparatory, then the students join the mainstream in their second year of study. The extended programme is a mixture of credit and non-credit bearing modules that extends the period of study by one year to complete the programme. The BSc students in the faculty's four-year programme complete their first year in 18 months before joining the mainstream programme. Students who embark on the extended programme have a much greater opportunity to succeed in their studies as it provides dedicated support to students who need assistance to bridge the gap between school and higher education. The module aims to equip students with the ability to cope with the reading and writing demands of scientific disciplines. In this module students use different information and time management strategies, build academic vocabulary, revise basic grammar concepts and dictionary skills, examine learning styles, memory and note-taking techniques, practise academic reading skills and explore basic research and referencing techniques, learn how to use discourse markers and construct definitions, and are introduced to paragraph writing. The work is set in the context of the students' field of study. Each class has no more than 50 students who sit in groups of about five. This is in line with what Gibbons (2002) asserts that when working in groups, ESL students are exposed to more language, have more language directed toward them, and produce more language than in whole-class interactions.

This study focuses on academic literacy for science students at this university and examines whether the curriculum for the Language and Study Skills module accommodates the linguistic diversity of ESL students. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify how ESL students perceive their experiences in the development of academic literacy, and to explore their perceptions of factors, attitudes, and experiences that have facilitated their development of academic literacy. This study also examines the experiences of lecturers in terms of accommodating linguistic diversity in the Language and Study Skills module.

1.2 Rationale for the study

The linguistically diverse classroom in higher-education settings has become the norm in South Africa. This linguistic diversity that characterises first-year classrooms at many South African universities is multifaceted and complex (Van Schalkwyk, 2008). The demographics suggest that enrolment of students who are linguistically different from what was the norm before 1994 will, in all likelihood,

continue to increase. Besides the increasing number of black South-African students, the Language and Study Skills programme has seen a rise in students from other African countries, as well as students from Asian countries like Thailand, Taiwan and Korea – all of whom have potentially different linguistic backgrounds to the students of the past. This diversity is evident in the demographics of first-year Language and Study Skills students in the BSc extended degree programme at the university where the study was conducted. Consequently, it is of crucial importance that programmes for the development of academic literacy skills constantly seek to effectively address the needs and difficulties of students in the South-African tertiary context, in this case, the needs of ESL students in a linguistically diverse setting. It is therefore the civic responsibility of these universities "to address the realities of educational transformation" (Archer, 2010: 495). But student diversity (including linguistic diversity) should not only been seen from a student deficit perspective. According to Orange and Horowitz (1999), educators should view diversity as an important resource for innovation. To become valuable contributors in academic communities, students must learn to think and speak its discourse (Northedge, 2003). Successfully initiating students into these discourse communities would appear to be one of the goals of tertiary education.

My interest in this topic developed over time, following my involvement in the four-year extended programme as I interacted with students with diverse first languages in this programme. This study focused on how the lecturer and student, and student-to-student interaction accommodate linguistic diversity in the classroom based on both students' and lecturers' own perceptions of the teaching and learning context in the module. The researcher believes the outcome of this study may contribute to research on students' development of academic literacies and provide a deeper understanding of factors that impact students' writing at university level. Moreover, the findings from the participants could possibly assist the university to develop viable solutions for supporting, not only BSc students but students from different faculties who may have similar challenges in the process of mastering academic literacy skills that are essential in performing academic tasks. In addition, the findings of the study could be useful to lecturers and tutors in ESL contexts because it could contribute to insights into those aspects of academic literacy in which students require support.

1.3 Defining the key concepts

1.3.1 Academic literacy

Academic literacy plays a critical role for students' learning and it helps develop the knowledge of academic content (Van Schalkwyk, 2008). In this context, academic literacy is seen as knowing how to speak and act within a particular discourse, and the reading and writing that occur within the discipline

as tools through which to facilitate learning. The linguistic diversity of these students highlights the importance of developing curricula, teaching strategies and policies to help all students succeed at university. Understanding and respecting the range of languages represented in the classroom may help in developing strategies for teaching and learning academic literacy that may, in turn, encourage and support student achievement. A part of educators' responsibility, then, would seem to be an audit of the literacy requirements that students will need for their future lives. Academic writing plays a critical role in socialising students into the discourse of subjects and disciplines at universities. However, because of the massification of higher education, many students are struggling to maintain academic-writing standards that are acceptable in higher education. This massification has increased the demand for academic development programmes as a practical strategy to enhance the academic-writing skills required by students (Jacobs, 2005). Undergraduate students are expected to possess excellent English language and higher-order thinking skills, such as logical and critical thinking as well as analytical and innovative skills. However, in advocating for these high-order thinking skills, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are often oblivious to the schooling experiences of students and how these experiences influence their writing in higher education (Jacobs, 2005; Archer 2010; Pineteh, 2013).

According to Samraj (2002), an earlier view of academic literacy focusing only on students' reading and writing skills has become inadequate. In recent times, academic literacy has been redefined to include a complex set of skills and accomplishments required when students enter higher education institutions, as well as skills required to make an effective departure from universities as independent researchers (Van Rooy & Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2015). In this study, academic writing is viewed as a literacy practice rather than a skill because writing in higher education is not simply "a set of neutral techniques that are somehow separate from the social context" (Archer 2010: 499). Rather, it denotes "not just what people do, but what they make of what they do, and how it constructs them as social subjects" (Clark & Ivanic, 1997: 82). Academic writing as a literacy practice is not simply about conforming to a set of conventions or disciplinary rules, but it is also a cultural and social practice, which involves using different cognitive abilities to negotiate power, authority and identity within the landscape of universities (Street, 2001).

For students to succeed at university, they need to develop their reading and writing skills to cope with university coursework in different disciplines (Baumann, & Graves, 2010). Academic literacy for science students sets BSc students on the path to acquiring this literacy by providing opportunities to engage with science texts, and obtaining the values of science through collecting, analysing and writing about real data. Acquiring academic literacy in science involves learning to communicate in the

language of science and ''act as a member of the community of people who do so'' (Lemke, 1990:1).

1.3.2 Language diversity

The landscape of South African universities has changed significantly since the demise of the apartheid regime. Although the legacy of apartheid is still ubiquitous in South Africa, higher education has become more accessible to South Africans regardless of race and gender (Leibowitz, 2004; Grant, 2015). The shifting vision of South African universities is attributed to the government's vision to redress the ills of the apartheid era, democratise the education system through the promotion of racial and gender parity, and the development of skills that are responsive to needs of the new South Africa (Leibowitz, 2005; Van Dyk, Zybrands, Cillie & Coetzee, 2009). As universities strive to expand participation of previously disadvantaged communities, a more diverse student body has and continues to enter higher education institutions. This upsurge has meant a presence of a linguistically diverse student population. The increasing diversity of students at universities cannot be reversed. This diversity leads educators to consider how educational research on language diversity and academic literacy needs to keep up with rapid demographic changes.

The present view of academic literacy takes cognisance of diversity, complexity, and contextualisation (Van Rooy & Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2015). Academic literacy is always situated within specific social practices and within specific discourses (Gee, 2003). Therefore, there is a need for a relevant academic literacy curriculum to help students acquire this knowledge and related skills. Although there are multiple attributes of linguistic diversity, the different languages that exist in the academic setting of Language and Study Skills will be the focus of this study because literacy and language are necessary antecedents for ESL students. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the term linguistic diversity will be used as it relates to students whose primary language is not English.

1.4 Statement of the problem

Educators in contemporary higher education settings face many challenges. These challenges are diverse cohorts of students, the expanding contexts of literacy and maximising learning through literacy. Researchers like Lillis and Swann (2003) and Archer (2010) have well-documented the expansion of access to higher learning since the 1970s. It is also widely accepted that the teaching of academic literacy practices – writing in particular – has a crucial role to play in retention and throughput. In today's educational arena, academic literacy is central to higher education and is one of the most important factors influencing academic success (Archer, 2010). There is growing academic pressure on all students, especially for ESL speakers who are learning through English, which they may not yet have mastered. Research in classroom discourse has drawn attention to the importance of understanding linguistic influences in the process of learning within higher education (Kress, 2003).

Since the ability of ESL students to develop the complex collection of competencies is fundamental to their success, an understanding of the factors that facilitate their growth in this area is also significant. Efforts to welcome, understand and support all students, and to treat their linguistic backgrounds as valid and important should be reflected in every aspect of the learning environment (Nieto, 1996). Howard (1999) and Meier (2005) claim that when educators make an effort to understand and value the diversity of their students, they are better able to develop meaningful and flexible teaching strategies that can help students achieve academic success. This study set out to explore how students and lecturers deal with linguistic diversity in the Language and Study Skills classroom at one South African university.

In light of the above, the following research question informed the study:

> *How, if at all, does an Academic Literacy curriculum accommodate the linguistic diversity of first-year students?*

This question was investigated with the help of the following sub-questions:

- What are the perceptions and experiences of students and lecturers on the accommodation of linguistic diversity in the Language and Study Skills curriculum?
- How, if at all, do instructional strategies accommodate classroom linguistic diversity?
- How do classroom instructional practices serve as either an impediment or an encouragement to the students' mastery of academic discourse practices?

The above questions not only provided a platform for my research, but also assisted me in preparing the research instruments and gathering the most appropriate data for the study. The questions also linked to the rationale for the study, and they provided focus for the ensuing research.

1.5 Assumptions

The first assumption underlying this study is the fundamental principle in higher education that most students considered under-prepared based on entrance criteria, can be successful in their desired academic goals with appropriate support, pedagogy, and opportunity. The second assumption is that competence in higher education reading and writing is part of a broader set of competencies known as *academic literacy*. The third assumption is that students are able to carefully reflect on their intellectual and personal development in reading and writing and articulate the elements of the experience.

1.6 Overview of the research design and methodology

This study falls within the interpretive paradigm, seeking to obtain an understanding of a particular phenomenon. The research aims to interpret and understand perceptions and experiences within a natural setting. The objective in the interpretive paradigm is to better understand a particular

phenomenon and thus the focus is on the "qualities of the phenomenon rather than the quantities" (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:3).

The phenomenon under investigation here required in-depth exploration. A case-study methodology was, therefore, adopted because it allowed the collection of rich data in a natural setting. In turn, this allowed the exploration of the understandings, experiences and perceptions of research respondents (Mason, 2002), which were selected purposively. Data was collected through interviews with four lecturers (N=4) and an online questionnaire administered to thirty selected students (N=30). Data was analysed following the analysis procedures of qualitative content analysis (as described by Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). Ethical considerations were adhered to throughout the planning, data collection, data analysis and the writing up of the research report (see Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of the research methodology).

1.8 Chapter outline

The following outline was followed in this study.

Chapter 1: Orientation to the study

The purpose of this chapter is to lay the foundation for the study by explaining the phenomenon being investigated. This chapter also gives a brief overview of the study, a statement of the problem and the research design and methodology employed in the study.

Chapter 2: Review of the literature

This chapter provides a review of literature relating to ESL speakers. It also discusses research pertaining to teaching and learning in linguistically diverse classrooms.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

This chapter outlines the research paradigm, approach and design, the process of data collection and analysis, as well as the justifications for the choices made.

Chapter 4: Results and discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings from questionnaires and interviews used in this study.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and possible implications

This chapter gives a summary of the major insights from this study and the contributions that it makes to the field of academic literacy.

1.9 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has introduced the background, context, rationale and outline of this study. The main research question was identified and supported by secondary questions. This chapter has explained the problem being investigated in the study. The chapter has also given an overview of the research

design and methods adopted in the study before closing with how the thesis has been organised. The next chapter will provide a discussion on the relevant literature pertaining to the study.

CHAPTER 2

ACADEMIC LITERACY AND DIVERSITY INVESTIGATED

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to this study. A literature review can be described as a structured investigation of a body of research that addresses the topic of a study. A review of literature related to language in teaching and learning and linguistic diversity in the academic literacy classroom was done. This review provided a foundation for building knowledge and demonstrated how the study could proceed. Also, the literature review provided a context for conceptualising the study and established a frame of reference for interpreting the findings. This chapter contributes a theoretical understanding of teaching and learning in a linguistically diverse classroom to the broader study described in this thesis. It also looks at literature reports on possible challenges students may face in academic writing and tries to address intervention strategies for these challenges. In each instance, the chapter outlines the relevance of the issues to the research questions of this study.

The chapter is structured as follows: first, linguistic diversity will be defined and discussed in detail as there is no doubt that the population of students comes from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Next, the qualities of a curriculum will be looked at in detail. In light of the CHE's call for curriculum reform in undergraduate studies, it seemed appropriate to explore the Language and Study Skills curriculum. As Scott (2013) highlights, the main challenge at universities is to design curricula and curriculum structures as well as pedagogical approaches that enable students to unlock their potential. Students themselves, in different higher education institutions, have called for reform and decolonisation of the curriculum which makes interrogating the curriculum critical in this study. Academic literacy, its structures, and the BICS/CALP influence on ESL learners are then explored because the call to focus on curriculum design in higher education in South Africa also highlights the importance of the academic literacies and the teaching of these in new curriculum structures. Developing academic literacies is a critical graduate attribute for all students. Also, several studies, for example, Thesen and Van Pletzen (2006) and Van Rooy and Coetzee-Van Rooy (2015) have indicated that writing at university may be a problem for first language speakers of English, which makes the case worse for ESL students. Extensive research in South Africa has shown that students for whom English is an additional language face a much greater challenge with the academic literacies (Thesen & Van Pletzen, 2006; Leibowitz & Mohamed, 2000; Paxton, 2007). This chapter also presents the importance of reading and highlights some intervention strategies to mitigate the academic literacy challenges of university students. The main purpose of the intervention strategies is to ensure that students are

provided with standards that can help educators to mitigate these challenges.

2.2 Diversity in the context of the study

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1983), the word *diversity* originates from the Latin term *diversus*, which means more than one, of a different kind, or variety. The national Department of Education (DoE) in South Africa asserts that diversity is broad and has many meanings. Diversity includes race, class, gender, religion, culture, different levels of physical and mental ability, different talents, different sexual orientations, different lifestyles, family norms, and different languages (DoE, 2000). Cushner, McClelland and Safford (1992:24) define diversity in the educational context of the school as "the ethnic heritage of a distinct subjective culture, including a unique value system, norms of behaviour, modes of interaction, socialisation practices and linguistic patterns''. For DiTomaso and Hooijberg (1996), diversity is the range of characteristics which not only result in perceptions of difference between people, but may lead to a response in others that advantages or disadvantages the individual. Understanding diversity in the context of the classroom implies the inclusion of students from different linguistic, cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds. In today's diverse classrooms, more and more students represent the countless languages reflective of our global society. Diversity in the context of this study refers to the wide range of linguistic differences between the students who populate the Language and Study Skills classroom, and therefore the focus will furthermore be on this form of diversity.

2.2.1 Linguistic diversity

Linguistic diversity is a global phenomenon today. It has been defined broadly as the variations displayed by human languages (Terralingua, 2011). Linguistic diversity can be defined in terms of the total number of languages and the numbers of people speaking the language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1990). Linguistic diversity in South Africa is acknowledged and valued in the constitutional recognition of eleven official languages and the Language in Education Policy (De Klerk, 2002).

Multilingual classrooms have become the norm rather than the exception in many universities, including those in South African universities. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2003), education in most (if not all) the countries of the world takes place in multilingual contexts. Multilingualism in the classroom context could be understood from two different perspectives: a) where more than one language is used with and/or being taught as a subject to the students; and b) where the students in the classroom come from diverse linguistic backgrounds. This study focused more on the second perspective.

Getting to know the students' linguistic positions holistically and their educational and personal histories could help lecturers determine what students' familiarity with academic language are, and

inform the development and implementation of relevant curricula.

2.3 Considering Higher Education curriculum

One of the most important activities of a university is the development of curriculum in line with national and international requirements and realities. A curriculum as a field of inquiry and scientific study is grounded on Dewey's progressive philosophy of learner-centred approaches to learning around the formative years of the 1900s (Pring, 2007). This philosophy is based on the perception that content and learning experiences in academia should aspire to meet the needs and interests of the learner. Dewey adopted the ideas of democracy and social reform as pinnacles for curriculum development and argued that a curriculum should be relevant to students' lives (Simpson & Jackson, 2003). What can be deduced from Dewey's philosophy is that the purpose of education should not revolve around the acquisition of a pre-determined set of skills, but rather the realisation of one's full potential and the ability to use those skills for the greater good. Tyler (1949) defines a curriculum as a plan of action or a written document that includes strategies for achieving desired goals or ends. Furthermore, a curriculum usually contains a statement of aims and specific objectives. It indicates some selection and organisation of content; it either suggests or displays certain patterns of learning and teaching. Also, it includes a programme of evaluation of the outcomes (Tyler, 1949).

The aim of the curriculum is to empower students to become successful students who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve; create confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives; and finally emerge as responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society. The development of personal learning and thinking skills within a curriculum will help achieve these aims. If students are to be prepared for the future, they need to develop essential skills and qualities for learning, life and employment. Some of these skills relate to learning in disciplines, as well as other more generic and transferable skills. As such, a curriculum should be a dynamic one.

Alongside the functional skills of language, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), personal learning and thinking skills are a fundamental part of learning across the curriculum. These skills should be embedded in the programmes of study as they are an essential part of any degree qualification. Although there is no agreed definitive list of principles of curriculum design, a useful set of principles for those engaged in curriculum design is to strive towards producing a curriculum that is holistic, coherent, inclusive, accessible, student-centred, one that fosters a deep approach to learning, encouraging independence in learning and has links to research scholarship, based on feedback, evaluation and review.

Students are the starting point and central focus for curricular planning and educational decision making. According to Brown (2007), a linguistically informed curriculum can be educationally

beneficial if it articulates a coherent approach to academic language issues. Therefore, a linguistically informed curriculum should be accessible to educators and students, relevant to their learning objectives and be integrated into an existing classroom environment (Brown, 2007). Educators need to adopt inclusive and flexible approaches to instruction which recognise the heterogeneity of the students in the classroom.

The functional definition for this study is based on Lemke's (1990) definition of academic literacy mentioned in Section 1.3.1. Therefore, in order to collect, analyse and write about real data appropriately in a tertiary academic context, students should, among other outcomes, be able to: a) understand relations between different parts of a text, via introductions to conclusions; b) know how to use language that serves to make the different parts of a text hang together; c) understand a range of academic vocabulary in context; d) produce and interpret information presented in graphic or visual format; e) distinguish between fact and opinion, essential and non-essential information, and f) understand sequence and order, and do simple numerical estimations and computations that are relevant to academic information, that allow comparisons to be made, and can be applied for the purposes of an argument.

Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Hewings, Lillis and Swann (2003) suggest that academic writing is often the invisible dimension of the curriculum, which students are not explicitly taught, yet in some way are expected to conform to agreed standards, norms and conventions. Understanding what it takes to succeed in an academic setting should likely determine how programmes for ESL students in a university setting are designed. According to Baker (2006), the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) distinction helps to explain the relative failure of many ESL students. BICS is what students need to know to function in everyday life and to communicate on a very basic level. A person who has BICS is conversationally fluent. CALP requires students to demonstrate a comprehension of academic terms. Students move from basic conversation skills to actually understanding and participating in the standard classroom. With just surface fluency, the students often fail because their cognitive academic language proficiency is not adequately developed to cope with the demands of the curriculum. Cummins (1980) is also a proponent of the BICS AND CALP concepts. According to Cummins (1980), language proficiency moves along a continuum that includes context-embedded and context-reduced communication settings. The BICS and CALP are key in this study and are discussed in greater detail in section 2.4.3.

2.3.1 Decolonising the curriculum as a linguistic concern

Decolonising the curriculum has recently become the focus of many students at Higher Education

Institutions. While some curricula were changed with the advent of democracy in the 1990s, more needs to be done. Curricula are characterised by continuous rethinking and renewal in the pursuit of social justice, not only in higher education, but also in the country as a whole. South African students began a campaign in 2015 to decolonise the curriculum at universities ''by ending the domination of Western epistemological traditions, histories and figures'' (Molefe, 2016:32). Students have called for the end of domination by white, male, capitalist, heterosexual and European worldviews in higher education and the incorporation of other South African, African and global perspectives and experiences as the central tenets of the curriculum, teaching, learning and research in the country (Shay, 2016). Mbembe (2016) contends that there is something wrong when programmes designed to meet the needs of colonialism and apartheid continue well into the liberation era. Letsekha (2013:9) maintains that the higher education system requires a ''fundamental overhaul of the whole epistemological model underlying the current educational system''.

Liberation from apartheid oppression in South Africa brought about opportunities for the reconsideration and eventual recognition and adoption of the languages that, during the colonial and apartheid eras, were seen as backward and irrelevant to the needs of the modern world. The granting of official status to these languages and providing learners an option to be taught in them within formal education after the demise of apartheid, is part of the decolonisation and liberation processes. Learning and teaching in one's own language in a postcolonial context like South Africa is a matter of social justice, in relation to the upliftment of the previously disenfranchised indigenous communities (Mgqwashu, 2013). In formal education, such upliftment is dependent on students' ability to produce discipline-specific and acceptable quality of written work, either as assignments or during a written or oral examination. The assessment and acceptability of written work at university level involves more than endorsing students' ability to regurgitate tutorial, lecture or textbook material. It requires an evaluation of the extent to which students, regardless of linguistic, cultural, and class backgrounds, can manipulate language academically (Mgqwashu, 2013). Boughey (2005:167) defines this as the ability to use ''prior knowledge to interpret a work; predicting a further outcome or a logical conclusion; identifying values in a spoken and written message''. In the context of academic literacy and discipline-specific modules taught and mediated in the language spoken by most students as an additional language, as research by Mgqwashu (2013) indicated, such assessment goals often get frustrated. This means high failure, exclusion and dropout rates at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. In some cases, it results in slow progress as students take longer than required to finish their studies (Mgqwashu, 2013). Even though decolonising the curriculum is not the focus of this study, it is important to consider decolonisation in revising and renewing curricula, especially in

considering the role language plays in higher education settings.

2.4 The role of language in the Higher Education classroom

Language in education plays a crucial role in effective teaching and learning as students' proficiency in the medium of instruction largely determines academic success (Cummins, 2007). Accordingly, comprehensive research on language in education is necessary to inform practice that promotes effective learning and teaching in higher education. It is particularly pertinent to South Africa, a linguistically diverse country, where the history of language in education has been shaped by political interests, as well as pedagogical considerations in the medium of instruction (Hinkel, 2011). The status of English as the language of commerce and government has strengthened in post-apartheid South Africa (Alexander, 2003). This elevation of English has resulted in it retaining its status as the preferred language of teaching and learning (LoLT) in higher education.

Acquiring oral skills for many ESL is generally overwhelming; however, it is more difficult to grasp formal and de-contextualised English as used in academic writing. Also, learning academic English entails having English language fluency in different registers. A major obstacle for ESL students is that they often have to absorb large amounts of content and language knowledge in a short a time as possible. Dison and Pinto (2000) reason that all students who are new to higher education need a transition period in which to develop cognitive and linguistic competence. Moreover, most ESL students bring with them inadequate academic skills which make it more difficult to assimilate new content, especially when English is the medium of instruction.

2.4.1 Considering Language, Academic Language, and Academic Literacy as a basis for student learning

Since the early 1990s, there have been numerous studies addressing issues that relate to academic literacy from a range of research areas: linguistics and discourse analysis, composition studies, adult education and higher education (Street, 2001; Lillis & Turner, 2001). When discussing the definition of academic literacy, Van Schalkwyk (2008) attests to the complexity of acquiring academic literacy for ESL students and it could be mooted that the two-word nature of the term adds to this complexity. It is therefore important to also briefly consider the notions of language and that of academic language, before moving on to a discussion of academic literacy in higher education contexts.

Language is the medium of education and is central to any education system. Even when the content of education is not language, that content has to be communicated through a language. Wolff (2006:50) declares that "language is not everything in education, but without language everything is nothing in education."

Academic language is the language used in classrooms and other learning materials and is different in structure and vocabulary. Zwiers (2008) claims that academic language serves three interconnected and broad roles. These roles are to:

- **describe complexity** – academic language allows students to describe difficult concepts in clear and concise ways;
- **describe higher order thinking** – academic language allows students to describe complex thinking processes that are used to understand, solve problems, and express ideas; and
- **describe abstraction** – academic language enables students to describe ideas or relationships

  that cannot be easily acted out, pointed to or illustrated with images.

Scholars like Krashen (2003) and Brown (2007) suggest that academic language involves a measurable stage of proficiency, as well as mastery of content knowledge, and learning strategies that promote continuing language and curricular learning. Others like Wong-Fillmore and Snow (2000) expand the concept of academic language to include factors that are linguistic, cognitive, and social in nature.

These notions of language and academic language have influenced the developing research field of academic literacy. Academic literacy may be defined as the complex linguistic, conceptual skills for constructing, analysing, and communicating knowledge in a subject area. According to Yeld (2003), academic literacy includes the ability to understand information presented in various forms, paraphrase and present information visually, summarise, describe, write expository text, develop and signal one's own voice, acknowledge sources, and form basic numerical operations. Essentially, to be successful in their personal and educational goals, students need to understand lectures and understand challenging texts, take part in academic conversation, and form rational views and other focused interpretations. They must write with clarity, conviction, and sophisticated thought.

The last decade has seen the development of a body of work described as academic literacies. Henderson and Hirst (2007:27) note that the term *academic literacy* "tends to hide any of the diversity that exists, thus restricting one to a singular view of literacy as a particular set of practices." When academic literacy is considered as academic literacies, and these literacies are viewed as sets of practice, the emphasis moves towards ways in which students learn to participate and make meaning within an academic context (Street, 2011). Academic literacies include critical thinking, database searching, knowledge of academic conventions such as referencing, use of formal register and the ability to manipulate a range of academic genres. The concept of multiple literacies is assuming greater importance alongside developments in technology (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012). Academic literacy constitutes the value system of academic discourse that is validated by the university (Street, 2011).

2.4.2 Academic literacy in Higher Education

Learning in higher education means adapting to new ways of knowing, understanding, interpreting and organising information. Reading and writing within academic disciplines constitute central processes through which students learn new subjects and develop their knowledge about new fields of study (Gee, 2001; Street, 2001). Students need to develop a range of abilities including skimming, scanning, making inferences, drawing conclusions, reading for main ideas, summarising, analysing and evaluating in order to develop the advanced reading and writing skills understood in academic literacy (Lea & Stierer, 2000).

However, such skills are not necessarily in place in all contexts. Despite national efforts to address the inequalities perpetuated during the apartheid era and continued work on closing the gap that was created as a result of these inequalities (Maphosa, 2014), students continue to enter the higher education system with less than adequate reading and writing skills. Academic writing is widely recognised as challenging and potentially problematic for students. Problems in education are widespread, and students enrolling at South African universities require additional support to enable them to succeed in their studies (Maphosa, 2014:11). Van Rooy and Coetzee-Van Rooy (2015) emphasise the fact that language is regarded as one of the most critical issues contributing to the poor academic performance of students at South African universities. In fact, they describe it as one of the most demanding tasks that students face. Some of the concerns come from the realisation that finding an academic voice and identity may be frustrating for some students, particularly during the transition to higher education. The success of students in any university is indisputably about developing a culture of intellectual enquiry and "aspects of social integration which involve the affective dimensions of their engagement with higher education" (Beard, Clegg & Smith, 2007:236).

2.4.3 Theoretical perspectives on language acquisition of second-language students

In the South African context, the term *additional language* would be preferable to use because English is not the only second language of many students. However, for the purpose of this study, the term English Second Language (ESL) is used as it is the most commonly used term in literature on the topic. In the context of this study, ESL students have been defined as students who were raised in a home where the main language used on a day-to-day basis is not English and where they use English only in environments where their native language is not used (Memmer & Worth, 1991).

Understanding and decoding text is vital for ESL students to master academic content since English vocabulary is a primary factor in comprehension. Such students need assistance to improve their literacy skills to understand the rules and conventions of academic discourse (Amos & Quinn, 1997). Vinke and Jochems (1993) indicate that the lower the level of English proficiency for a student, the

more critical it becomes in defining academic achievement. Understanding second-language acquisition theories is crucial to having a clear picture of what ESL students go through when they are taught English with the expected competence of first-language speakers in the classroom.

CALP, on the other hand, is context-reduced. It refers to language where there are few clues about the meaning of the communication apart from the words themselves. The language is likely to be abstract and academic, for example, written texts in content areas such as English literature, math, science, and social studies. CALP skills also encompass reading, writing and thinking about subject-area content material. Students also use CALP skills to compare, classify, synthesise, evaluate and infer. CALP is more than understanding vocabulary and learning academic facts for a test; it also requires students to sharpen their cognitive abilities and learn new concepts (Cummins, 1980).

In essence, Cummins' two-tiered theory supports the idea that university ESL students need to be both functionally and academically literate, and that these two proficiency levels occur in succession (Cummins, 1980). Unlike BICS learning, CALP learning is a long-term undertaking. Collier (1987) and Collier and Thomas (1988) suggest that it can take up to 10 years for ESL students to reach grade-level CALP English depending on the kind of English instruction they receive at school. What Cummins' BICS and CALP signify for ESL education is that for ESL students to read and understand content area textbooks and perform cognitively demanding tasks, such as writing research papers, participating in debates and presenting research papers, they need CALP English that takes them beyond BICS English. In academic settings, activities are cognitively demanding and often context reduced. Context reduced language refers to communication where there are few clues about the meaning of the communication apart from the words themselves. The language is likely to be abstract and academic, for example, textbook reading and classroom lecture. Cummins' theory provides one perspective regarding the differences in the way that language is learned and used in different settings.

Cummins' theory, however, is not without critics. Notwithstanding the support that Cummins' postulations have received, there are theorists who do not support certain features of his theory. Edelsky, Hudelson, Altwerger, Flores, Barkin and Jilbert (1983), and Edelsky (1990) were among the first theorists to critique the BICS/CALP distinction. They dispute the validity of the BICS/CALP construct and have argued that the BICS/CALP distinction reflects an autonomous perspective on language that ignores its position in social practice and power relations. Edelsky et al. (1983), Edelsky (1990) and MacSwan (2000) have called it a deficit theory, as it attributes the academic failure of ESL students to low cognitive/academic proficiency, rather than to inappropriate schooling. Edelsky et al. (1983:1-22) also claim that the CALP construct consists of ''test-taking skills'' and that it encourages

skills-oriented instruction, which impedes the literacy development of ESL students who flourish in meaning-oriented and whole-language instructional contexts.

Cummins and Swain (1986) and Cummins (2000) responded to these critiques by pointing out that the construct of academic-language proficiency does not in any way depend on test scores to support either its construct validity or relevance to education. They also pointed out that Edelsky (1990:17) failed to define what she meant by a ''deficit position''. Furthermore, when CALP is discussed as part of a causal chain, it is not discussed as an isolated causal factor, as portrayed by Edelsky and her colleagues. CALP is reasonably one of several individual learner attributes which are determined by societal influences and it interacts with educational treatment factors in affecting academic progress. Language proficiency is seen as an intervening variable that mediates academic development and has never been explained as independent of the socio-cultural context (Cummins & Swain, 1986:13).

Notwithstanding these criticisms, the BICS/CALP distinction has been one of the first to bring about significant debate around the issue of language proficiency. The BICS/CALP distinction has provided one of the most marked descriptions of the relationship between language proficiency and academic achievement. It has served to highlight the specific ways in which theorists understand or misunderstand the nature of language proficiency and academic success and difficulties. Finally, Anderson's cognitive learning theory asserts that learning takes place progressively through stages: the cognitive stage (instructional phase), the associative stage (the stage at which the learner applies what has been taught but may still need support), and the autonomous stage (the stage at which the learner performs tasks automatically and without support) (Anderson, 1983, 1985). To progress through these stages, the learner must have extensive practice and feedback, as well as be instructed in the use of learning strategies. Ajayi (2009) suggested that in order to meet the needs of students of diverse languages in the ESL classroom, ESL educators must design tangible and successful strategies to support these students.

Given all these factors, it is not surprising that ESL students take several years longer to develop fluency in academic English than in conversational English. Thus, academic language poses special challenges for them.

2.4.4 Students' competence in their first language

Cummins (1980) developed the *Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis* that advocates that second-language proficiency is dependent on the competency already achieved in the first language. Therefore, if a student's first language is more developed, then the second language would be easier to develop. Other researchers like Baker (2006) contend that a high level of proficiency in the first language makes possible a similar level in the second language. In other words, students can reach

high levels of proficiency in their second language, if their first-language development has been strongly promoted by their environment.

Baker (2006) points out that Cummins challenged the common belief that first and second language development and learning are independent processes in the brain. His hypothesis claims that there is a common underlying proficiency between the first and second languages. However, when skills in the first language are not well developed and education in the early years is learnt completely in the second language, further development of the first language will be delayed. This in turn is likely to have a limiting effect on second-language acquisition (Baker, 2006).

For this study, this reasoning implies that ESL students at university may be able to use both first and second languages in everyday contexts, but that does not necessarily mean that their language ability is sufficient to be able to write academically-sound assignments. Thus, ESL students may face certain barriers that may hinder their progress and delay their competency in academic literacy.

2.4.5 Language-related barriers in a linguistically diverse classroom

It is evident that for ESL students, clear articulation of their thinking is not always easy; for this reason, they might be more reluctant than other students to express their thinking. Although ESL students may be able to speak English, they still do not operate at maximum capacity because of various language barriers (Baker, 2006). According to Spolsky (1986), there are four elements of language-related barriers in a linguistically diverse classroom. These elements are important in understanding teaching and learning in linguistically diverse classrooms. The elements include:

a) **Different languages**: characterised by different languages spoken by a group of people with a recognised name. This is typical of the Language and Study Skills classroom at the university where the study was conducted, where students have different first languages.

b) **Different dialects**: noticeable when students in the same classroom share a first language but speak related versions of the same language. This could be a result of dialects that reflect geographical differences.

c) **Social class dialects** are prevalent when people tend to talk like members of their social class and people whom they deal with. In education, this becomes an attitudinal issue. Some educators tend to categorise students as either bright or stupid based on their accents (Corson, 1993).

d) **Preferred style of verbalisation**, which Spolsky (1986) argues that communication is simpler when there is shared grammar and vocabulary, pragmatic rules, as well as the physical context between the speaker and listener. What this means in a classroom context is that lecturers and students may not share such socially-valued tendencies. Therefore, a lecturer should cultivate a style which emphasises verbal communication and consequently, an increased

verbal load for the students. This creates particular problems for students from certain classes, resulting from the differences in styles of verbalisation encouraged in the home, and those demanded by higher education. Although all the above barriers could be prevalent in the Language and Study Skills classroom, this study focuses only on the barrier of different languages.

Krashen (1982, 2003) theorised an affective filter as part of his theory of second language learning. This concept suggests that an individual's emotions can directly interfere or assist in the learning of a new language. According to Krashen (1982, 2003), when a learner feels anxious or fears being embarrassed about speaking English, a filter is activated that prevents him/her from making optimal use of linguistic input, even when instruction has been adapted to facilitate meaningful access to content. Pappamihiel (2002) pointed out that not only can anxiety distract second language students from the linguistic input that they encounter, it can also lead them to withdraw from social interaction, which is critical to learning English, as well as academic content. It is important to discover what students think about their writing abilities because not only does writing impose huge cognitive, linguistic and social demands upon both native speakers and ESL students, but it is also the most difficult to master, particularly for ESL students with limited opportunities to experience authentic input (Brown, 2007).

Mascher (1991:2) argues that English as the medium of instruction "is a language which is non-cognate to the learner's first language''. Mascher (1991:3) explains that cognate languages are those that "belong to the same family of languages, sharing a common origin, historically and culturally, which makes their grammar and vocabulary similar." As a result, Mascher (1991) has found that the ESL students' task is especially difficult as they are faced with the difficulty of learning not only through the non-cognate language but also the non-cognate language itself, a situation that requires special linguistic skills of an analytical nature, the kind which ESL students generally do not have.

2.4.6 Dealing with Second Language Students in a linguistically diverse classroom

In any classroom, students are a varied mix of personalities who come with varied perspectives on learning. The communication between students, among themselves and their lecturers, forms the energy of a classroom. To promote language and skills development, educators of ESL students should be able to analyse the linguistic demands of oral and written discourse (Cummins, 2000; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2005). These linguistic demands involve identifying key vocabulary, understanding the semantic and syntactic complexity of language used in written materials, and knowing specific ways students are expected to use language to complete each learning task (Cummins, 2000). Bennett (1990) has argued that teaching in multilingual classrooms requires a teacher to be fully aware of the

differences between the students and to be flexible enough to cope with the conditions and situations which may be very different from those in linguistically homogenous classrooms. She finds that "what often appears to be effective teaching in relatively homogenous classrooms is not likely to be effective in multilingual classrooms" (Bennett, 1990:265).

Reagan (1997) suggests training provision be made in applied linguistics, in teacher education programmes. Some scholars have responded to this need, sharing their knowledge and offering advice regarding working with second-language students. For example, Wong-Fillmore and Snow (2000) and Reagan (1997) outline the background knowledge educators need in areas such as language and linguistics, language development, second-language acquisition, diversity and socio-linguistics. Willis and Harris (2000) questioned whether academic literacy curricular adequately addresses the multiple challenges that ESL students face. Educators would need significant professional development to gain a full understanding of second-language acquisition theory. Watt and Roessingh (2001) conclude that educational institutions need to do more to seize the opportunities and overcome the challenges created by the presence of linguistically diverse students. However, some key concepts can be quickly understood and applied in the classroom. Therefore, to meet the needs of students of diverse languages in the ESL classroom, ESL educators should design tangible and successful strategies to support these students. Lucas and Villegas (2011) urge educators to keep the following key principles of second-language learning in mind in their teaching.

2.4.6.1 The difference in conversational language proficiency and academic language proficiency

Second-language speakers gain meaning from cues when engaging in everyday conversation, for instance, facial expressions and gestures, as well as from words. Such conversations are often predictable and focus on the speakers' personal experiences; thus, they are relatively accessible to ESL speakers. Nevertheless, communication that is less connected to personal and shared experiences like academic discourse, becomes more impersonal, technical, and abstract (Gibbons, 2002). Using written text makes meaning more dependent on language, thereby adding another layer of abstraction. Conversely, linguistically responsive educators should understand the difference between conversational and academic language proficiency, so they are better prepared to provide ESL students with support to successfully complete academic tasks.

2.4.6.2 Comprehensible input just beyond current level of competence

According to Wong-Fillmore and Valadez (1986), this principle is a reminder that the quality and nature of language that ESL students are exposed to plays a key role in their learning. Classroom language should stretch ESL students beyond their current proficiency (Krashen, 2003). Educators of ESL students need to consider the linguistic demands of academic texts and tasks to determine how to modify English to make it comprehensible and appropriately challenging to these students.

2.4.6.3 Social interaction for authentic communicative purposes

Learning for ESL students requires more than linguistic input; it also requires direct and regular interactions with people who are fluent in that language (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2005). Through negotiating meaning that occurs in interaction, students gain access to comprehensible input and extend their productive capabilities (Ellis, 2000; Swain, 1995). Gibbons (2002) states that when working in groups, students are exposed to more language, have more language directed toward them, and produce more language than in whole-class interactions. Studies show that this strategy has been successfully used even in classes where the teacher does not share the language with the students (Lucas & Katz, 1994; Cummins, 2007) and promotes cooperative learning. Students work together in small groups that are positively interdependent (Jacob & Mattson, 1990; Curran, 2003). Jacob and Mattson (1990) suggest that group work increases language proficiency, improves academic achievement and encourages improved social relations among students. They also suggest that group work increases student participation in the classroom. Since student populations are increasingly diverse and continue to share classroom spaces, it becomes critical to review curricular and determine whether the academic needs of these students are accommodated for them to meet academic demands.

2.4.6.4 Strong native language skills and parity

An understanding that proficiency in one language is a significant resource for learning a second language is vital in teaching ESL students. Thomas and Collier (2003) emphasise that strong academic language skills in the native language are linked to success in second- language learning and academic achievement. The fundamental principle is that language skills developed in one's first language transfer to a second language (Cummins, 2000). Students who are academically strong in their first language already have a broad range of subject-matter knowledge and skills to draw on while learning in a second language, thereby reducing the burden of having to learn subject matter and a new language at the same time (see section 2.4.4). Thus, a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching ESL students is bound to fail because students bring different linguistic and academic backgrounds to learning. To successfully scaffold learning for ESL students, educators must become familiar with the students' native-language ability, especially their literacy skills and their academic preparation in their first language.

Schwarzer, Haywood and Lorenzen (2003) claim that the attitude of educators about native language usage in classroom settings is either to forbid, allow, maintain or foster native language attitudes. Schwarzer et al. (2003) used these terms in the American context, however, they are appropriate to use in this study in the discussion of the lecturers' views about students' first language in their classrooms, particularly in instances where the students themselves are allowed to use their first

language to assist one another in their groups.

2.4.6.5 A safe and welcoming classroom environment

Generally, learning is enhanced for most students when they are in a safe environment, rather than a threatening one. As previously mentioned in this study, Krashen (1982, 2003) hypothesised an affective filter as part of his theory of second-language learning. According to this hypothesis, when a learner feels anxious or fears being embarrassed about speaking English, a filter is activated that prevents her or him from making optimal use of linguistic input, even when instruction has been adapted to facilitate meaningful access to content. For optimal learning to occur, educators must be conscious to provide students with a safe and anxiety-free environment.

The student's affective state strongly influences his or her learning in general, more so for ESL students. The fear of being harassed because of one's accent and errors in speech and writing can be a source of draining anxiety for ESL students. To support these students' linguistic and cognitive growth, educators must take active measures to prevent such harassment from taking place in class. They can do so by establishing and enforcing classroom rules that respect all students, minimise competition and encourage cooperation (Verplaetse & Migliacci, 2008).

2.4.6.6 Explicit attention to linguistic form and function

In the 1970s and 1980s, ESL educators stopped using the traditional grammar-translation method and adopted approaches that emphasised comprehensible input and communicative competence over formal accuracy. This emphasis on communicative methods to language learning and teaching implied that second-language learning would happen naturally with exposure to the language. Scholars and educators have begun to give renewed attention to linguistic form, reasoning that to become proficient, students need to focus on the formal elements of English (Schleppegrell, 2001). Language forms should be learned because they are needed to fulfil certain functions. Therefore, particular language forms are distinctive to different academic disciplines. Additionally, there are general functions of language that apply across academic disciplines. Students are expected to use language to argue, compare and contrast ideas, draw inferences and conclusions and persuade audiences of the merits of a writer's or speaker's ways of thinking. Each use of language requires special linguistic forms that students must learn if they are to master these academic skills. As a result, educators need basic knowledge of the forms of English and the diverse ways that language is used in academia.

Several strategies can be used to reduce the burden on students of having to process the oral language they hear in class while trying to make sense of new concepts. These include minimising the use of idiomatic expressions (Hite & Evans, 2006), pausing more frequently and for longer periods than in usual speech to give students time to process the language they hear (Verplaetse & Migliacci, 2008),

providing outlines for lessons to help focus the students' attention, repeating key ideas, and building redundancy into teaching to ensure that students grasp the main points of a lesson (Gibbons, 2002), and establishing classroom routines that enable students to predict what is expected of them in different situations.

2.4.6.7 Differentiated instruction

Differentiated instruction aims to expand each learner's growth by adjusting instructional tasks to address students' needs while building on their strengths (Cummins, 2007). Instructional modifications for ESL students comprise a case of differentiated instruction. This an approach to teaching that considers the wide variation in students' background knowledge, interests, abilities and language evident in classrooms today. The idea of differentiating instruction to accommodate the diverse ways that students learn, involves common sense along with robust support in the theory and research of education. It is an approach to teaching that advocates active planning for student differences in classrooms.

2.4.6.8 Scaffolding

Scaffolding is one of the instructional adjustments that can be used to make academic content understandable for ESL students (Gibbons, 2002). The goal is to help the learner "move toward new skills, concepts, or levels of understanding" (Gibbons, 2002: 10) so that the support can eventually be removed. Scaffolding is the means through which educators "amplify and enrich the linguistic and extra-linguistic context" of a learning task (Walqui, 2008: 107) to make it possible for ESL students to successfully complete it. According to Lucas (2011), to scaffold learning for ESL students, educators need three types of pedagogical expertise:

a) familiarity with the students' linguistic and academic backgrounds;

b) an understanding of the language demands inherent in the learning tasks that students are expected to carry out in class; and

c) skills for using appropriate scaffolding so that students can participate successfully in those tasks.

In essence, educators need to identify features of the language inherent in those tasks that are likely to pose the greatest challenge to the students.

2.4.6.9 Engaging ESL students in purposeful activities

Social interaction for authentic communicative purposes in which students are respondents, fosters the development of conversational and academic English (Swain, 1995). However, by simply putting students into groups and giving them a task is not likely to foster the learning of content or language. The focus and nature of the interaction are also important. As Trumbull and Farr (2005: 124) explain, ESL students need to be placed in situations where they have “access to rich and meaningful input and where they are motivated to produce output.” In such situations, all respondents should have “substantial and equitable opportunities to participate” in the interaction (Walqui, 2008: 114). The

interaction should involve the negotiation of meaning, not simply carrying out an exercise that requires little thought. Verplaeste and Migliacci (2008) suggest that educators modify their talk to ask how and why questions, respond to student comments in non-evaluative ways and use instructional conversations in which educators act as facilitators rather than as questioners. She advises educators to allow ESL students to use their native languages for problem solving with students who speak the same language.

2.4.6.10 Using extra-linguistic support

When the language of a lesson is too demanding for students, extra-linguistic support can give them a medium other than language through which to access the content (Gibbons, 2002). Lucas (2011) suggests that the use of visual tools such as illustrations, maps and videos can quickly convey considerable information to students, thus reducing the amount of auditory information that they must process to make sense of the instructional topic. Educators can also adapt or rewrite text to make the language more accessible while being careful to not dumb down the content (Hite & Evans, 2006; Verplaetse & Migliacci, 2008).

2.4.6.11 Trans-languaging

Academic literacy requirements in English, at higher education level, remain challenging and have an impact on throughput rates and classroom interaction (Madiba, 2014; Makalela 2015). The consequences are that by the time South African learners access universities as students, few have achieved what coordinate bilingualism, where a person can express or understand complex meaning in more than one language in the four basic literacy skills (Widdowson, 2001). The reason for this is, partly, in higher education, African languages do not have histories as academic languages in higher education. Across the sector, there is little awareness of trans-languaging pedagogies, or awareness of how to teach the languages and content areas simultaneously (Makalela, 2015). Trans-languaging is the process by which bi- and multilingual students draw on all their linguistic resources to create meaning during learning opportunities (Makoe & McKinney, 2014). The understanding of trans-languaging as a practice of conscious switching in conversation or writing between two or more discrete languages is growing, theoretically, to the idea of communicants drawing on available language resources with a less sharp distinction made regarding a practice of conscious switching between two or more distinct languages. This is one strategy that lecturers could employ in their classrooms.

2.4.7 Reading as an effective tool for ESL students

This study also looked at students' attitudes towards reading as reading has been identified as a tool for academic success. Many definitions have been suggested for reading, such as ''reading is a complex information-processing skill in which the readers interact with the text in order to create meaningful discourse'' (Akarsu & Harputlu, 2014:61). Academic success for students should be fundamental to any programme or curriculum development. A positive attitude towards reading has been found to be

motivation for students to continue reading. Students primarily access academic information through reading. Numerous researchers have stressed the benefits of reading in an academic context for ESL students. Rimensberger (2014) confirms that being a good reader is a ''life skill in the 21st century''. Palani (2012) states that the achievement of academic success requires successful reading. Integrating a scientifically researched, compulsory, well-structured and supervised reading development programme may contribute to the alleviation of some of these academic literacy challenges and may enhance academic skills development offered in access programmes at higher education institutions (Rimensberger, 2014). Tien (2015) advocates that extensive reading is crucial for the enhancement of reading skills and acquisition of knowledge. Therefore, reading is an indispensable skill; it is also fundamentally interrelated to the process of education and to students achieving educational success.

2.4.7.1 The benefits of reading

At university, students are exposed to many texts and textbooks that require independent reading. Students are expected to comprehend what they read for them to successfully analyse, evaluate, synthesise and critique on the information from various sources. Even though many students have the ability to decode texts when they reach the tertiary level, they are unable to understand what they have decoded; this means they lack comprehension skills. Therefore, the teaching of reading strategies is vital for students to improve their reading comprehension and enhancing their chances of academic success (Tien, 2015). The ability to read is acknowledged as the most stable and durable of the second-language modalities (Palani, 2012). Students should always be encouraged to read not only prescribed books, but also self-selected books that consist of large amounts of meaningful language that will assist in improving their language skills.

Reading also expands students' vocabulary. This is evident in the numerous studies conducted over the years in schools and universities (Palani, 2012; Tien, 2015). These studies confirm that students acquire new word knowledge incidentally through comprehension-focused reading in a second language. In support of this view on reading, it is safe to assume that by increasing vocabulary knowledge, the level of more accurate spelling and correct grammar utilisation is automatically improved. Reading builds knowledge of various kinds to use in various forms of writing (Pretorius, 2005).

2.4.7.2 Reading and L2 learners

Pretorius (2002) believes that the reading situation in South Africa has reached a point of crisis, and Palani (2012) echoes this sentiment by asserting that promoting reading habits is critical for the creation of a literate society. Carter (2010:5) believes the reading problems experienced in South Africa could be ascribed to the ''detrimental effects of the apartheid regime''. Difficulties with reading comprehension could significantly contribute to the dropout rate of students in universities. There can

never be enough emphasis placed on the role and importance of English reading in the attainment of education through communication abilities, specifically in South African HEIs and the English lingua-franca classroom (Lukhele, 2013). Higher Education requires students to spend large amounts of time in reading to gain the required information and knowledge from the content of the prescribed reading material. Fadel and Elyas (2015) suggest, integrating a scientifically researched, compulsory, well-structured and supervised reading development programme may contribute to the alleviation of some of these academic literacy challenges and may enhance academic skills development offered in access programmes, especially for those students who are reluctant to read beyond prescribed materials.

Pretorius (2002:46) suggests that even though ''language proficiency and reading skills both draw on linguistic knowledge and skills, reading develops specific cognitive-linguistic skills that are not necessarily operative in oral forms of discourse''. As reading for the purpose of learning and for the development of knowledge in the academic institution requires students to be able to make links, understand opinions, research and be able to apply it to their studies, there appears to be a definite correlation between the level of proficiency in the reading ability in English and the academic performance of students. This study takes cognisance that there are immeasurable benefits to reading, specifically academically.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed review of literature that was considered relevant for this study. Issues surrounding the development of English proficiency and academic literacy skills for ESL students in linguistically diverse setting have been discussed. The chapter has also covered the barriers that second-language students may face in the classroom and some principles of second-language learning. The literature review has demonstrated the complex relationship between ESL students' cognitive abilities, language and academic language usage. The task of understanding ESL students' language proficiency was underpinned by Cummins' (1980; 2000; 2003) distinction between BICS and CALP.

The next chapter will provide an in-depth discussion on how the field of academic literacy in a linguistically diverse setting was systematically investigated.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and methodology used in this study. A research design serves as the "architectural blueprint" of research (Bickman & Rog, 1997:11), as it involves consideration of the research approach to be used, and the best methods of collecting and analysing data (Bickman & Rog, 1997). It also links data collection and analysis activities to the research questions and ensures that all research aspects are addressed. The credibility of a research study and its worth rest with the design implemented (Bickman & Rog, 1997). The design also refers to alignment between the paradigm in which the study takes place, the methodology employed, as well as the methods, sampling strategy, and analytical lens used to gather and analyse data.

3.2 Research paradigm

According to Smith (2011), no research takes place in a theoretical vacuum. When a researcher sets out to do an inquiry, he/she does so from an informed position. This knowledge is what helps the researcher to frame the inquiry within a particular theory. Silverman (1993:1) defines theories as "statements about how things are connected whose purpose is to explain why things happen as they do." As such, theories help us to "sort out our world, make sense of it and guide us on how to behave in it and predict what may happen next" (Smith, 2011:14). This study draws from the interpretive theoretical paradigm. The goal of interpretivist research is to understand and interpret the meanings of human behaviour rather than to generalise and predict causes and effects (Neuman, 2000). For an interpretivist researcher, it is important to understand motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences which are time and context-bound (Neuman, 2000).

Interpretivists adopt a more personal and flexible research structures, which are receptive to capturing meanings in human interaction, and make sense of what is perceived as reality (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). Within interpretivism, the researcher and his or her informants are interdependent and mutually interactive (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). The interpretivist researcher enters the field with some sort of prior insight of the research context but assumes that this is insufficient in developing a fixed research design due to a complex, multiple and unpredictable nature of what is perceived as reality (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). The researcher remains open to new knowledge throughout the study and lets it develop with the help of informants. The use of such an emergent and collaborative approach is consistent with the interpretivist belief that humans have the ability to adapt, and that no one can gain prior knowledge of time and context- bound social realities (Hudson

& Ozanne, 1988).

3.3 Research methodology

A case study methodology was used in this study. Case study research is an examination and analysis of a single case or collective cases intended to capture the complexity of the object of study (Stake, 1995). A case is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its natural setting, "especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 1994:13). The case study methodology was chosen because it allowed me to focus on how individuals interacted with each other in their environment. In this study, both students and lecturers in the module. The methodology allowed the construction of meaning through capturing as much as possible of the respondents' thoughts and views regarding their academic experiences from their perspective. This focus allowed me, as a researcher, to gather information and to give voice to the research respondents.

In this study, the case studied is the Language and Study Skills module in an extended BSc degree programme at one South African university. The main unit of analysis is the Language and Study Skills curriculum. This researcher explored this phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. To understand the phenomenon of linguistic diversity in the curriculum, this researcher deemed it necessary to gather rich, detailed and in-depth information, which a case study design would sufficiently provide.

A literature review was undertaken prior to data gathering. To ensure the quality of the study, data triangulation was used. Triangulation is defined as a validation process where a researcher searches for convergence among numerous and different sources of information to form themes (Creswell, 2003). These themes are not separate and detached but interlinked in complex ways such that none can be ignored or be prioritised over others.

3.4 Research methods

Several data collection methods were adopted to further develop and understand the case, shaped by context (as suggested by Stake, 1995). The purpose of data collection is to develop systematic research evidence, searching for a comprehensive collection of evidence which looks for both confirming and disconfirming data (Yin, 2003). Yin (2003) identified the following possible sources of evidence for case studies. These sources include documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artefacts. From these methods, a questionnaire (see p.75) and semi-structured interviews (see p.76) were used.

In this study, questionnaires administered to selected students were complemented with interviews

where lecturers were afforded an opportunity to explain their perceptions of the curriculum and their second language students, which forms the necessary dialogue in the co-construction of meaning advocated for in the interpretive paradigm. Both the research instruments were developed, piloted and modified based on the feedback received during the pilot phase.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

Burns and Grove (2007) define a questionnaire as a printed self-report form designed to elicit information that can be acquired through the written responses of the respondents. The information obtained through a questionnaire is similar to that obtained by an interview, but the questions tend to have less depth (Burns & Grove 2007:368). They offer the possibility of anonymity because respondents' names were not required on the completed questionnaires. Eliciting student responses in this way is one of the preferred methods that researchers worldwide use for investigating issues relating to students learning, in general (Lucas & Villegas, 2011) and to the acquisition of academic literacy and the development of student writing (Prosser & Webb, 1994; Richardson, 2004; Starfield, 2004; Leibowitz, 2005), in particular.

Initially, different data collection instruments were explored to find the most effective way to collect rich data. Questionnaires were selected as instruments for the students because it was more convenient for them to be in their own comfortable space and in their own time when responding to the questionnaire and have minimal influence from the presence of the researcher. I considered self-administering the questionnaires to students; however, it was more practical for me to distribute them electronically as students have different timetables and it would have been difficult and time consuming to self-administer the questionnaires. The questionnaires in this study consisted mainly of open-ended questions. Open-ended questions were used because they allowed respondents to respond to questions in their own words and provide more details (Polit & Hungler, 1993). Specific open-ended questions were selected because I considered the role of each question in the context of study, and its status in terms of generating qualitative data. However, they might take up a greater amount of time and thought for respondents to answer, which can lead to respondents' loss of interest and willingness to respond (Neuman, 1994).

The questionnaire was pilot tested at the end of 2015 with three students from that year's cohort. The schedule was then revised based on the responses received during the pilot. Feedback on the questionnaire was also received from fellow students in my Master's programme and the supervisor in the programme. The pilot questionnaire responses were not included in the data analysed in this study.

Most importantly, the researcher was known to the students as someone who worked as a lecturer

in the department and had a link with the programme for which they were registered. Henning Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:54) caution that one should be mindful of the power relations that exist in the research situation and, for this reason, even though questionnaires were done online, responses need to be viewed through this particular relational lens.

3.4.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the second investigative method in this study because they are a research procedure that is readily accepted by most respondents due to their familiarity with the technique and because it often helps them to clarify their thinking on a particular topic (King, 2004). Using interviews as a method for gathering data in this study was pertinent because it would provide the in-depth insights from a small number of respondents that would fit the research design (Denscombe, 2003). Interviews are effective research instruments for obtaining getting deep insights about how people experience, feel and interpret the social world. An interview is much more than "a neutral exchange of asking questions and getting answers" (Fontana & Frey, 2005:696); rather, it is an active engagement process between two (or more) people. Fontana and Frey (2005:696) argue that much depends on the personalities, the position and the purpose of the respondents and the way in which these impact on one another to result in "a contextually bound and mutually created story".

Dawson (2002) argues that semi-structured interviews are possibly the most widespread research procedure used in research studies. In this kind of interview, the researcher pre-establishes a set of questions to acquire more information about specific issues and sometimes identifies new issues that were not originally part of the interview. This method is characterised by its flexibility, as the researcher can add or remove questions from the schedule based on the results of each interview (Dawson, 2002). This study used semi-structured interviews for eliciting responses from the lecturers involved in the module. An interview guide was used during the interviews with lecturers to maintain basic standardisation across the interviews; however, the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for the necessary flexibility in the phrasing, sequence and follow-up of questions necessary to explore the participant's individual experiences in relation to academic writing (Paisley & Reeves, 2001).

The reason I chose face-to-face interviews with the lecturers was to have access to lecturers who were in the same setting as the students. At the time the study was conducted, there were six Language and Study Skills lecturers altogether (including myself). Five lecturers were asked to participate and all five agreed to participate. However, at a later stage one decided to withdraw from participating in the study. Therefore, the interview schedule was developed based on the remaining four lecturers. The interviews took place in the months of April and May 2016 based on the respondents' schedules.

Interviews provided valuable data to the study. The lecturers who participated were essential in my study as they were experience educators of multilingual classes. A list of questions was developed in advance to explore and determine the lecturers' experiences with linguistic diversity in the Language and Study Skills curriculum. All interviewees were assured of the confidentiality of the information given. The interview schedule was piloted with one lecturer who then gave feedback that was applied to the schedule. This lecturer is not one of the respondents interviewed in this study. On the day of the interview, the researcher arrived an hour before the scheduled time to set up the room and tape-recording equipment. The researcher ensured successful interviews by providing a friendly, relaxed environment, as free of distraction as possible. To allow the free flow of ideas the interviewer (researcher) and the interviewee sat at approximately right angles to each other to facilitate eye contact and allow the researcher to observe any non-verbal gestures without appearing threatening.

All interviews were audio-recorded and I transcribed the recordings myself. Doing one's own transcriptions is advantageous in that one can begin to see the emerging patterns in the data. Researchers like Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:105) encourage doing one's own transcriptions because the process allows the researcher to "come and stay close to the data'', which in turn facilitates an inductive meaning-making process that is characteristic of the interpretive paradigm adopted in this study. Therefore, doing one's own transcriptions gave a clearer overview of the data collected while noting any special areas of focus for subsequent data collection. Among the disadvantages of using transcriptions of interviews as the raw data for analysis, is the difficulty the transcriber can sometimes experience in hearing all that is said (Denscombe, 2003).

3.5 Sampling

Mouton (2000) defines a sample as elements selected with the intention of finding out something about the total population from which they are taken. According to Burns and Grove (1993:779), a population is defined as all elements that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in a study. Johnson and Christenson (2004) define sampling as a process of obtaining a sample from the population where the characteristics of a subset are selected from a big group. According to Parahoo (1997), in non-probability sampling, researchers use their judgment to select the respondents to be included in the study based on their knowledge of the phenomenon. Parahoo (1997:232) describes purposive sampling as "a method of sampling where the researcher deliberately chooses who to include in the study based on their ability to provide necessary data". Purposive sampling helps with selecting people and/or materials that are rich with information and appropriate for in-depth study (Patton, 2002; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The rationale for choosing this approach was that the researcher was seeking knowledge about the students' and lecturers' perceptions about the accommodation of linguistic diversity in the Language and Study Skills curriculum, which the respondents would provide

by virtue of their experience.

The goal of this sampling was to find individuals who could provide the richest and most pertinent information and insight related to the purpose of the study. A researcher should select candidates who are familiar with the issues being investigated, and are willing to talk and be representative of the range of points of view (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). As Schutt (2006) asserted about purposive sampling, students who had experience about the phenomenon being investigated and were willing to cooperate, were selected. A purposive sample that consisted of 200 students in the BSc extended degree programme, students from different linguistic backgrounds, whose first language was not English, was targeted to participate. The sample included students from all races in the population and were both South African and non-South African. In recruiting respondents for this study, assistance was sought from lecturers in the module. Although the 200 ESL students agreed to participate, only 30 responded to the questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered online to the targeted students in the Language and Study Skills module. The questionnaires were sent out in early April 2016, however, the difficulties experienced in getting students to respond resulted in a four-month delay of the study. Despite all the problems encountered in getting the students to participate, the group that did respond provided an interesting mix of students. The language distribution provided a useful spread of Afrikaans, Portuguese, and African languages, which was relevant to the study.

The lecturers were also purposively selected. Only Language and Study Skills lecturers were requested to participate in the study. All Language and Study Skills lecturers have, predominantly, ESL students in their classrooms. Four lecturers agreed to participate in the study. Face to face semi-structured interviews were conducted with all four these lecturers. An interview guide was used following topic trajectories that possibly strayed from the guide when this was appropriate. These interviews were recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis means to organise, provide structure and elicit meaning. An analysis of qualitative data is an active and interactive process (Polit & Hungler, 1993). Data analysis involves a systematic search for meaning from the collected data, so that what is learned can be communicated to others. According to Yin (2003), data analysis is the process of making sense, sifting, organising, cataloguing, selecting themes – processing the data. Data analysis has been viewed differently by various scholars depending on what the process has meant for them. For Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, (2004:103), the data-analysis process is the "heartbeat of the research", while Yin (2003) equates data analysis to finding one's way in a forest.

This study followed a conventional content analysis approach (Hsiesh & Shannon, 2005). Conventional content analysis is generally used with a study design whose aim is to describe a phenomenon, in this case, the perceptions of students and lecturers in the faculty regarding the accommodation of linguistically diverse students in the academic literacy classroom. In conventional content analysis, researchers avoid using pre-conceived categories (Kondracki, Wellman & Amundson, 2002), instead allowing the categories and names for categories to flow from the data. Data analysis starts with reading all data repeatedly to achieve immersion and obtain a sense of the whole, as one would read a novel. Then, data are read word by word to derive codes (Miles & Huberman, Morse, 1991) by first highlighting the exact words from the text that appear to capture key thoughts or concepts. Next, the researcher approaches the text by making notes of his or her first impressions, thoughts, and initial analysis. As this process continues, labels for codes emerge that are reflective of more than one key thought. These often come directly from the text and then become the initial coding scheme.

Codes are then sorted into categories based on how different codes are related and linked. Punch (2000:204) defines coding as the "process of putting tags, names or labels against pieces of the data". The data that was analysed in this study comprised mainly oral and written texts (in both the interviews and questionnaires).

3.7 Ensuring the quality of the study

Credibility, confirmability and transferability formed the framework for determining the rigour of this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility refers to the value and believability of the findings. Credibility can be enhanced with triangulation, which uses several methods to study one phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and involves two processes, conducting the research in a believable manner and being able to demonstrate credibility. In this study, triangulation was used to qualitatively collect and analyse data in relation to the academic literacy curriculum. Mouton (2000) maintains that triangulation refers primarily to the use of multiple methods of data collection with a view to increasing the reliability of observation. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1998), triangulation is based on the premise that each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality. Therefore, a combination of methods was used to elicit qualitative data relating to this study. Face-to-face interviews with the lecturers involved in the module and questionnaires with the students in this module were used. According to Stake (1995), triangulation also involves asking the same questions to different research respondents to get their views on an issue (respondent triangulation). In this study, both methodological and participant forms of triangulation were used.

The researcher used in-depth, individual semi-structured interviews for data collection and used a tape recorder to capture interviews verbatim. The researcher also conducted a literature review to

link the findings with previous research. Confirmability refers to the neutrality and accuracy of the data. Confirmation is the process of comparing data gathered from multiple sources to explore the extent to which findings can be verified (Mouton, 2000). For confirmation, data gathered from multiple sources were compared to determine the extent to which findings could be confirmed. Transferability refers to whether or not particular findings can be transferred to another similar context or situation, while still preserving the meanings and inferences from the completed study. A rich and vigorous presentation of the findings, with appropriate quotations, also enhances transferability (Mouton, 2000). In this study, detailed descriptions for the purpose of enhancing the transferability of the study were provided. Direct quotes from the respondents were illustrated.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Conducting a research study requires not only proficiency and diligence, but also honesty and integrity. This is done to recognise and protect the rights of human respondents. Scientific honesty is regarded as an important ethical responsibility when conducting research. Dishonest conduct includes manipulation of design and methods, and retention or manipulation of data (Creswell, 1998). To render the study ethical, the rights to anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent (see p.72) were observed. Written permission to conduct the research study was obtained from the relevant faculty where the study was conducted (see p.72). Ethical clearance was also received from Stellenbosch University (SU-HSD-002051) (see p.71).

Burns and Grove (1993) define informed consent as the prospective participant's agreement to participate voluntarily in a study, which is reached after assimilation of essential information about the study. Respondents were informed of their right to voluntarily consent, the right to decline to participate, also, the right to withdraw participation at any time without penalty. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures that would be used to collect data, and were assured that there were no potential risks or costs involved. All respondents received a consent form that explained the purpose, methodology, and terms of participation in the study, as well as their rights as respondents as stated above. Data collection occurred after the respondents completed the consent form and agreed to participate in the study.

Creswell (1998) states that a researcher must anticipate any ethical issues that may arise during the research process. According to the American Anthropological Association (2012), researchers are ethically compelled to consider the possible impact of their research prior to, as well as throughout, the research process. Researchers therefore need to protect their research respondents by developing trust, encouraging the integrity of the research and guarding against misconduct and any indiscretion that might reflect on their institutions (Creswell, 2003). Researchers must also not plagiarise, fabricate

or falsify information, or knowingly misrepresent information or its source (American Anthropological Association, 2012). For that reason, I ensured that the work was my own and all sources consulted were acknowledged.

3.9 Limitations

The study reflects only the experiences and perceptions of a small group of ESL students and lecturers in one module at one South African university. Given the fact that I worked at the university where the study was done, the students might have been somewhat influenced in their participation and responses because of my role in the academic environment. Decolonisation of education is not the focus of this study. In chapter 3, I will explore this in more depth under ethical considerations.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter described the research design used in this study. It explained the research methodology, including the population, sample, data-collection instruments, as well as the data-analysis process. The next chapter will provide a detailed analysis of the results from the semi-structured interviews with lecturers and from the student questionnaires.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the data collected through questionnaires that were completed by Language and Study Skills students, and semi-structured interviews that were conducted with their lecturers. The key focus of the chapter is to determine how, if at all, the academic literacy curriculum accommodates the linguistic diversity of the students in the BSc extended programme. This chapter records the analysis of the data in more detail, setting out the findings that were generated during this process. It comprises the analysis, presentation and interpretation of the findings resulting from this study.

The discussion of the findings in the present study is divided into two sections: a) perceptions and experiences of students, and b) perceptions and experiences of lecturers. In analysing data for this study, it was important to remember what Creswell (1998) expressed about incorporating the respondents' quotes in a research report. Incorporating the respondents' quotes provides their perspectives on the study which in turn brings out the co-construction of meaning presumed in an interpretive research paradigm (Creswell, 1998). In line with what Creswell promotes, data analysis and interpretation were integrated with direct quotes from the respondents of this study to support the conclusions made. As some of the respondents used a language that was not their first language, errors of concord and other language errors are numerous. It should be noted that questionnaire responses were taken verbatim as written by respondents and any grammar or sentence construction mistakes were not corrected. The findings are presented in accordance with the identified themes during data analysis.

The data collected for the study revealed that the Language and Study Skills module plays an important role in assisting ESL students cope with the demands of university study. The section below discusses the results from questionnaires and interviews in more detail.

4.2 Themes relating to students

This section deals with students' perspectives and experiences of the Language and Study Skills module. Here, six different themes are discussed namely, the languages students speak, their understanding of linguistic diversity, their academic experience, classroom participation, attitudes towards reading university studies and their perceptions of the accommodation of linguistic diversity in the academic literacy module. First, an overview of the students' demographics will be presented.

Of the surveyed student respondents, 50% were male (n=15) and the other 50% were female (n=15).

The summary of languages spoken by the students emphasises the diversity of the group in terms of language. The languages spoken by respondents varied as shown in the table below, with 'other' being the largest. Although students were not specifically asked to say what their first languages were, some voluntarily mentioned, for instance, Tshivenda and Portuguese as their first languages (see Table 4.1). English was included because according to some ESL students, their parents speak to them in English most of the time at home to help them improve their language competence, even though they consider themselves second language speakers.

Table 4.1: Student numbers by language

Language	Number
Afrikaans	1
English	6
IsiZulu	8
Sesotho	4
Other	11

The linguistic diversity of the students in the Language and Study Skills classroom is evident in the above table. This diversity needs to be considered when creating curricular.

4.2.1 Understanding linguistic diversity

The responses to the question: *"What does the term 'linguistic diversity mean to you?"* revealed a number of factors about students' understanding of linguistic diversity. The findings indicate that most of the students have an understanding of what this term means. Most respondents understood linguistic diversity to mean multiple languages used in one place, as indicated in the responses provided below.

> *Linguistic diversity is the interaction of a varied number of languages in a defined environment. I would also define it as an appreciation of the cultures associated with languages. In addition, it is the ability of integrating in such a way that they leave their ''linguistic corner'' into a more collaborative environment where the diversity is being embraced instead of being a barrier.*

> *Linguistic diversity means to accommodate more people in a verbal context.*
> *It [linguistic diversity] is an acknowledging and appreciate of different languages (sic).*

Linguistic diversity means unique languages together.

Linguistic diversity mean different unique languages all together (sic)

These responses demonstrate an awareness that students have about diversity in the classroom, and some have indicated that it should be appreciated. From these responses, it is evident that students have a good understanding of linguistic diversity and that all languages are valuable as one of the students' responses indicated. On the whole, students viewed language diversity as the existence of different languages in a particular area that needed to be embraced and appreciated in a multilingual country. This definition is not far off from Terralingua's (2011) who views linguistic diversity as the variations displayed by human languages. Linguistic diversity can be defined in terms of the total number of languages and the numbers of people speaking the language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Some students also spoke of acknowledging and appreciating of different languages. This sentiment is in line with what De Klerk (2002) have stated about linguistic diversity in South Africa, that it is acknowledged and valued in the constitutional recognition of eleven official languages and the Language in Education Policy. Students also shared their academic experience of the curriculum in the classroom with regard to class activities and participation.

4.2.2 Academic experience

Students described the way they experienced classroom activities and how participation in class improved (or didn't improve) their academic literacy. The focus here is specifically on classroom academic activities, for instance, the opportunities that were created for engagement in the classroom.

4.2.2.1 Classroom activities and participation

Students' responses to the question: *"At the beginning of the 2015 semester, which classroom activities, if any, supported the development of your academic language?"* show that several respondents believed that group work was the most beneficial in supporting their academic development.

Group discussions aided the development of academic language

Group work and group discussions

Group discussions and class presentations and assignments aided the development of my academic language

Working in groups and doing presentations

Group presentations in Language and Study Skills and Biology

These responses support the assertion by some researchers on the benefits of group work for ESL students. Wong-Fillmore and Snow (2005) assert that learning for ESL students requires more than linguistic input; it also requires direct and regular interactions with people who are fluent in that language. Gibbons (2002) also asserts that when working in groups, ESL students are exposed to more language, have more language directed toward them, and produce more language than in whole-class interactions. Gibbons (2002) states that when working in groups, students are exposed to more language, have more language directed toward them, and produce more language than in whole-class interactions.

However, there were other respondents who thought that written vocabulary exercises were most beneficial in their academic development:

The activities of vocabulary assignments, where we were expected to write sentences from certain words.

We had vocabulary exercises that we had to do.

Cummins (2000) contends that it is important for educators to identify key vocabulary to help ESL students understand the semantic and syntactic complexity of language used in written materials in order to meet the demands of academic literacy. It was interesting that about 20 percent of the students thought none of the classroom activities supported their academic development as ESL students. These responses may be an indication that the curriculum as it is currently does not benefit all students and may need to be evaluated.

There were students who did not accurately answer the question and referred to different modules, for instance, statistics, computer science or mathematics. Their responses show that some students struggle to understand and follow instructions. It is important that educators, when introducing a task, do not assume that all students, especially ESL students, will know how to carry it out (Lucas, 2011). To help students get the most from classroom activities, educators need to provide clear and explicit instructions of how to get the work done (Gibbons, 2002). In addition, educators must ensure that they use language that is comprehensible to ESL students at all times.

When asked to reflect on their classroom participation, responses to the question: "*How has participating in the Language and Study Skills classroom improved your performance in academic literacy*?" gave an indication of how students perceived the influence of participation in their academic literacy performance as seen below.

It gives that confidence to know that there are people who are there to help you improve your

academic literacy.

My confidence and my verbal skill (sic)

It has improved my academic literacy drastically seeing as I incorporated this into my other modules and it also taught me objectivity.

It has helped me in understanding the way in which concepts are written in academic literature.

My reading and understanding of words has increased.

Besides improving my grades it has helped my critical reading and presenting.

The use of discourse markers, I can use them better. Studying quicker cuz I know I can scan for relevant answers (sic)

I now know how to write in a professional and academically acceptable manner My reading and understanding of words has increases (sic)

My academic performance improved a lot due to group work and class discussion because I learnt how to communicate and understand the work using variety of methods.

It didn't make a big difference.

i didn't participate that much just did what i had to do (sic)

Most of the students seemed to enjoy the opportunities for interaction that were presented in the classroom. Students generally agreed that they were prepared adequately for the writing demands required at university. The findings here indicate that despite students claiming that they were adequately prepared for the demands of writing at university, lecturer responses and the language errors from the completed questionnaires paint a different picture. The implications are that more still needs to be done to help students cope with writing at university.

Five students felt that participating in the classroom did not help their academic literacy in any way. Although the students did not provide any reasons for this response, it would be interesting to explore further the reasons behind these responses as further research might contribute to the improvement of the module.

4.2.3 Reading

Principles, supported by researchers such as self-efficacy, underlie the provision of effective reading instruction for ESL students in general. Students who read extensively both inside and outside the class have far greater opportunities to acquire academic language than those whose reading is limited

(Cummins, 2007). Students' responses to the question: *"Which language and study skills library materials, if any, have enhanced your academic literacy skills?"* varied. Some students indicated that novels, textbooks and academic materials in general improved their academic literacy skills, whilst others preferred to read in their own languages or even watch videos on the Internet.

> *The novels both fiction and non-fiction*
>
> *Textbooks and newspapers*
>
> *Referencing guides*
>
> *Workbook, dictionary and thesauri (sic)*
>
> *Novels, short stories*
>
> *Reading books library*
>
> *We didn't use many library materials.*
>
> *IsiZulu is a great language I understand most of my material in; however, I am not a big fan of reading.*
>
> *I much rather prefer using the internet and YouTube*

Extensive reading has been shown to be of great benefit for ESL students. As Fadel and Elyas (2015) suggested, many students with critically poor reading abilities might never master the essential reading skills without an explicit reading intervention. A reading attitude can be altered by rebuilding damaged self-concepts, and self-efficacy spills over to academic writing. There can never be enough emphasis placed on the role and importance of English reading in the attainment of education through communication abilities, specifically in South African HEIs and the English lingua-franca classroom.

For students who prefer visual materials, Lucas (2011) suggests using extra-linguistic support. She suggests that the use of visual tools such as illustrations, maps and videos can quickly convey considerable information to students, thus reducing the amount of auditory information that they must process to make sense of the instructional topic.

When students were asked, *"How have these library materials enhanced your academic literacy skills?"* their responses showed a contrast in that some perceived that reading materials enhanced their academic literacy skills, while others felt reading did not enhance their academic literacy skills.

Increased my vocabulary and helped me to settle in as i come from a different background (sic)
Improved my academic literacy skills

They improved my reading and writing skills, they also help with academic vocabulary.
Yes in most parts.

They have improved my vocabulary and my sentence construction skills.
Reading books improved my reading speed.

I am able to complete assignments properly without plagiarising.

By improving my look on the English language, vocabulary expansion, memory improvement, improvement analytical thinking skills and an improved focus and concentration (sic)

These responses corroborate the assertions of Hoey (2005) that reading improves academic competence. A student who is a good reader will perform better academically than his/her lesser skilled peers. According to Pretorius (2002), the improvement of reading skills in students will lead to an improvement in the reading levels of the students, leading to better comprehension, understanding and academic achievement. Not all students like or were persuaded to read. These students indicated that they did not use library materials.

I don't use library materials, I use the study materials from ClickUp and my text books for my modules needed (sic).

I hardly used the library materials in 2015.

Avoiding regular reading can be detrimental to the academic success as reading, even for leisure, is beneficial to ESL students (Hoey, 2005). These responses reflect a poor understanding of how reading can benefit them. Reading has been shown to improve academic success among ESL students (see section 2.8).

4.2.4 Accommodation of linguistic diversity

Students' responses to the question: "*How, if at all, has your lecturer accommodated the linguistic diversity of students in the classroom?"* indicate that some students seemingly have some idea of what the accommodation of language diversity in a classroom setup should entail. The students described their lecturers' accommodation of linguistic diversity in a number of ways, differing from student to student at times, but sometimes common among some students. The following responses indicate that some lecturers have used the students' native language to scaffold their learning. This claim is attested to by some lecturers who used the students' mother tongues where possible to help the

students understand the materials better.

> *Our lecturer ensured that each and every one of her students got the same treatment regardless of his or her language. She was willingly helped everyone understand the concept and interact in class without making her students feel left out due to language barrier.*

> *She understand the differences in language backgrounds that the students had.*
>
> *The lecturer made examples that the students could relate with based on their linguistic backgrounds. As a result, the student can now form a relationship between what the she already knows and the new concepts that the lecturer is relaying.*

> *As one was able to understand a concept in their language when failed to understand in English*
>
> *She spoke a couple of venec words at times and told us their meanings (sic).*

> *It had to deal with her strategy. However, I am certain that she tried her best to help everyone by recommending what to do according to student level of English.*

> *She herself would occasionally learn some words in our language*

> *She helped every student in their native, in the scenario where a student could not understand.*

> *The classroom language was English, however, my lecturer spoke different languages, of which was a good thing. As one was able to understand a concept in their language when failed to understand in English.*

These noted practices may be seen as inclusive classroom practice. Inclusivity can be achieved by the teacher learning a few simple phrases in the languages represented in the classroom (Schwarzer et al., 2003:5) as seen in some of the above cited responses.

One student thought the lecturer watered down the curriculum by making tests easier for them to pass.

> *Making test easier i think* (sic)

As suggested by Hite & Evans, (2006), watering down the curriculum is not the solution to the challenges of academic literacy. Educators can adapt or rewrite text to make the language more accessible.

The lecturers as respondents in this study also gave their opinions on the accommodation of linguistic diversity in the curriculum. Many issues were raised as the lecturers described the students' limited language proficiency, inability to conceptualise, organise themselves and their work.

4.3 Lecturer perceptions and experiences

One of the objectives of this research project was to determine lecturers' perceptions and find out what their experiences of linguistic diversity in their classrooms. Three specific questions were raised for investigation at the beginning of this study. Therefore, this section presents the issues raised by lecturers and includes a discussion of the general themes that emerged from data analysis. The verbal data that were quoted for illustrating the specific themes were "typical" of the participants' responses to such categories. All the lecturers were cooperative during the interviews and seemed eager to share their experiences. The lecturers were all forthcoming during the interviews and shared their opinions in terms of module objectives, academic barriers that students face and students' language proficiency challenges and the impact that these issues were having in the classroom. Lecturers also shared the teaching strategies that they use in their classrooms and gave their opinions on the Language and Study Skills curriculum.

4.3.1 Module objectives

Many key issues were raised as some of the lecturers described what worked for them and their frustration with the current curriculum. All lecturers acknowledged that linguistic diversity in their classrooms was apparent as most students who were registered for this module were ESL students. On whether the students meet the objectives of the module at the end of the year, three of the four lecturers felt that the students partially meet the objectives.

> *I think it's more difficult for them to meet those or for them to actually apply the skills that are outlined in the objectives of the curriculum, largely because they are 2nd or 3rd language speakers in English.*

> *They do not meet most of the objectives. We are basically training them for tests. By the end of the module, they have quasi competence at best. I think they have ideas about certain things. They have picked up snippets that are useful but in terms of competence, they are still shaky*

> *If they do meet partial objectives, I think that will be measured by the pass rate. I think it will be largely through rote learning without any kind of deeper understanding of the structures of academic writing practices or skills that we teach. I sense that the pass rate does not indicate the level of student competence. It is artificially inflated, for example, we go through the format and the structure of typical exam and test papers before the test. So that is leading the student into answering in a certain way; there's little engagement and concrete thought.*

The above quotes also support the view of Commins and Miramontes (2005) that in linguistically diverse classrooms, educators can overcompensate for students' lack of language proficiency by

watering down the curriculum to make it more accessible instead of working to make challenging concepts understandable. This was corroborated by one student who thought that his/her lecturer made tests easier.

One lecturer, however, felt that ESL students met the objectives of the module and were at an advantage precisely because they were second language speakers of English.

> *I find that ESL speakers outperform the first language speakers because they work hard and know where their deficiencies lie whereas first language speakers don't.*

Lecturers also identified certain barriers that challenged students' academic success, as shown in the section directly below.

4.3.2 Academic barriers

Lecturers also shared what they found to be academic barriers for students, for example high volumes of work, poor language proficiency and difficult workbook activities presented particular challenges.

4.3.2.1 Student workload

Most lecturers believed that the standard of language used in the students' workbook is pitched at a higher level than what students can manage. On top of that, some lecturers raised concerns about too much work for the credits allocated to the module.

> *So I think we present the as you should be fluent in English, at this level you should understand language. High standard of English.*

> *I would start by saying that we do kind of fail them in terms of fluency I don't think that we accommodate them as well as we could because sometimes when I read texts, the way it's written, you know the style in which it's written. A lot of these students, because sometimes I'll be reading explanations and you find that they don't catch the subtleties and the irony because they are ESL students.*

> *Sadly looking at the weighting of our module, we have too many tasks to assess and for the students themselves to cope. Our tasks exceed the time that is allocated for this module. Students are given nine articles to read analyse summarise etc; what's going happen to the ESL student who is faced with sophisticated language in the National Geographic. How engaging is it going to be? What are they going to learn from it? Are they going to manage to paraphrase? Our workbook is random and not logically structured so what do they do? They resort to copy and paste.*

> *The amount of work is too much. We inundate them with work. I don't understand how we have eight mini assignments, four semester tests and two research assignments and then three grammar tests. It's insane. We are supposed to help support all the other subjects but we are not doing that. We are becoming an impediment. We are blocking them. We are keeping them so busy; they can't*

even focus on their core subjects.

The lecturers' concerns are in line with what Dison and Pinto (2000) identified as a major obstacle for ESL students that they often have to absorb large amounts of content and language knowledge in as short a time as possible. They suggested that all students who are new to higher education need a transition period in which to develop cognitive and linguistic competence. Moreover, as highlighted by some lecturers, often, ESL students bring with them inadequate academic skills which make it more difficult to assimilate new content.

4.3.2.2 Proficiency in English

All lecturers acknowledged that accessing the texts required a certain level of language proficiency and indicated that some students, at times, struggled to understand spoken and written instructions and that language and can sometimes hinder student participation. This observation is also corroborated by students who did not follow this study's questionnaire instructions, as indicated elsewhere in this study.

These describe the difference between conversational, contextualized language, and decontextualized, academic language. Lecturers are concerned that ESL students do not understand the concepts that fall into the decontextualized end of Cummins' range.

I've noticed that especially with ESL speakers, they might not understand my spoken instructions, they might not understand my explanations in English so they sit there and it's a haze because spoken English is faster especially if it's idiomatic L2.

The language thing is a barrier. I have had students who have come to me to say I don't speak English well, I am not comfortable to answer questions in class

ESL students often struggle to express themselves in English.

Where lecturers identify instructions as a barrier, Lucas (2011) suggests that they could, depending on the complexity of the task, ask students to take notes and/or to repeat the instructions back to them to make sure students understand what is expected of them.

4.3.2.3 Difficult workbook activities

One of the problems lecturers encounter when trying to develop CALP is that students do not understand decontextualized vocabulary, and this is compounded by the difficult workbook activities. Most lecturers felt that workbook activities presented a barrier to students' academic progress. They felt that the syllabus could be less intense to accommodate the calibre of student they had.

We used magazines like Time Magazines which did not speak to the socio-economic circumstances of our students.

The workbook content of activities themselves presented a barrier in that topics given in the workbook were more for the people who came from urban areas than rural so conceptually the students from the rural areas would not necessarily understand discussions.

Our syllabus is so intense, and it is so carefully precisely timewise it's all very quick as well because we don't have the time to actually go back and re-explain or simplify the coursework that they are doing.

Some lecturers indicated that it was difficult to deal with the above-mentioned barriers because there was hardly any time to address them.

It is difficult to deal with the barriers. Our syllabus is so intense, and it is so carefully precisely timewise; it's all very quick as well because we don't have the time to actually go back and re-explain or simplify the coursework that they are doing.

We can try consultations and sending them to the tutors, other than that there is no time to go back and explain.

Several strategies can be used to reduce the burden on students of having to process the oral language they hear in class while trying to make sense of new concepts. These include minimising the use of idiomatic expressions (Hite & Evans, 2006), to help students get the most from classroom activities, educators need to provide clear and explicit instructions of how to get the work done (Gibbons, 2002).

4.3.3 Teaching strategies

This study also sought to find out the strategies lecturers employed in their linguistically diverse classrooms in response to the linguistic demands of the students. Lecturers used certain strategies to help students cope with their academic work. Some used the students' first language where possible to help students grasp academic concepts. Some lecturers took advantage of the classroom group format while others used some forms of scaffolding. Reading was also promoted among students over and above classroom activities. When the lecturers were asked about their classroom practices, they described their approaches, their responses highlighted the following.

4.3.3.1 Using the students' first language

Lecturers revealed that they employed several strategies in their classrooms to manage the linguistic needs of ESL students. When it comes to using first language in the classroom, some lecturers said they allowed students to speak in their first language, and some spoke to them in their mother

tongues. This is a commonly cited inclusive classroom practice. Inclusivity can be achieved by the lecturer also learning a few simple phrases in the languages represented in the classroom (Schwarzer et al., 2003), as was discussed in the literature review (see section 2.8).

One lecturer in this study indicated that she used students' first language when speaking to those who were struggling with English where that was applicable and was aware of others who did the same. This lecturer spoke the first language, albeit irregularly, to students in her class who found English difficult to follow. Although she said it is not a practice she encouraged, it was commendable that she made an effort to include those students who had not mastered English. Such practices promote not only an understanding of what is learnt, but also boost students' self-esteem when they know that they and their languages are valued in the classroom (Cummins, 2000). As demonstrated by the quotes below, lecturers and students used mother tongue where possible to help some students.

> *They will revert back to the mother tongue as they struggle to communicate in English as they never had to really. I know that my colleagues who speak other languages find that their students do the same.*

> *Sometimes they help each other in their mother tongue if they do speak the same language. I guess the teaching strategy is really to make them use each other as learning resources and if that then does not work, to revert back to me as a resource as far as it's possible.*

> *Often, I help them in their mother tongue.*

Cummins (2000) in his analysis of research in bilingual education suggested that first language and second language academic proficiencies are interdependent. Although, languages are separated at the surface level of function and communication, there is an underlying cognitive/academic proficiency that is common across languages. Cummins emphasised that education in first language provides the learner with specific subject matter information that can be transferred to second language learning and this makes learning in the second language easier.

4.3.3.2 Group work

The goal of group work is to engage students in interactions with other students to build skills in speaking and listening. All lecturers acknowledged the benefits of group work, as can be seen from the following responses.

> *The students sit in smaller groups in the classroom in diverse cultural and linguistic groups; they tend to help each other a lot in class. By doing that they do tend help each other to overcome certain*

barriers and explain difficult concepts to each other, I guess the teaching strategy is really to make them use each other as learning resources and if that then does not work, to revert back to me as a resource as far as its possible.

Group work helps. They help each other in their groups.

Students tend to also help each other in their groups.

Mix groups with students who can help them. Afrikaans students must be mixed more with others as most of them did not do their subjects in English. Sepedi speakers want to work together Generally you'll find that our students do group themselves mostly according linguistic backgrounds for example Afrikaans students will sit in a group and they will negotiate meaning especially if they don't understand something. Your Zulu speakers may do the same although they are fewer than our Sotho speakers.

Research suggests that the grouping of students must be purposeful to maximise the benefits (Jacob & Mattson, 1990). However, in the Language and Study Skills classes, as much as students sit in groups, they choose their groups and are not necessarily purposefully grouped by their lecturers. It is, therefore, likely that students will choose to sit with those they easily identify with, be it by race, language or any other common feature. Educators need to critically evaluate trends in pedagogy. Only those techniques that encourage the development of CALP should be used.

4.3.3.3 Scaffolding

One lecturer used a form of scaffolding to break down concepts for students in the classroom. The lecturer said breaking down concepts helps to deal with some of the barriers that students face.

I spend most of the time in class breaking down concepts so that they understand. When they read it, or it's said once to them, they get confused. I have not found an effective way of dealing with the curriculum. I leave out unnecessary things that aren't important to the student learning how to write academically.

The above response is in line with what researchers recommend about scaffolding. The goal of scaffolding is to help the learner "move toward new skills, concepts, or levels of understanding" (Gibbons, 2002:10), so that the support can eventually be removed (Walqui, 2008). It is interesting that only one lecturer mentioned this strategy. To optimally help ESL students, it is important for educators to identify the relevance of CALP in their own classrooms (see section 2.4.3).

4.3.3.4 Reading promotion

The link between reading and writing has been clearly articulated in ESL research (Hoey, 2005). Some lecturers in this study promote and emphasise the benefits of reading as shown below, which is consistent with research findings about reading advantages.

I have told my students that in terms of vocab, the only way they can improve is by reading. I cannot help them with that.

There's that support and reading encouragement from me.

What I also do is, more recently, is go down to the library and encourage students to pick books that they like to read because the reading skills are not in place. Start with something even if it's a newspaper.

4.3.4 Curriculum

This section deals with the lecturers' responses on whether the curriculum accommodates the linguistic diversity of ESL students.

4.3.4.1 Accommodation of ESL students

Most lecturers felt that the current curriculum disadvantages ESL students as their academic needs were not fully accommodated. The sentiment was also that some sections in the curriculum were overly complicated.

There is no specific section is targeted at ESL students. We assume a basic proficiency in English for all students but largely it's not there.

I can't say there are aspects where we try to accommodate Xhosa or Afrikaans speakers, but I think everything is aimed at the idea that academic language is a foreign language to all the students.

I don't think that we accommodate them as well as we could.

There are very little activities targeted at ESL students.

A linguistically informed curriculum should be accessible to educators and students, relevant to their learning objectives and be integrated into an existing classroom environment (Brown, 2007). Educators need to adopt inclusive and flexible approaches to instruction which recognise the heterogeneity of the students in the classroom. The challenge for lecturers would be to become more aware of the linguistic diversity in their classrooms, and to plan teaching that is more strategic for content learning that will benefit an entire classroom of students. From Cummins' research, it can be inferred that educators who strive to provide meaningful contexts for academic literacy instruction for all students, would more likely encourage the development of CALP.

4.3.4.2 Curriculum change

Most of the lecturers gave some suggestions to re-curriculate the module to address the gaps in the curriculum.

> *I think we need to re-curriculate desperately. It is going to be a difficult balance to strike purely because our classes are so mixed where English language abilities are concerned. Most of our classes comprise ESL students so we definitely need to re-curriculate. We need to structure the types of activities and the order in which they should be introduced, etc.*

> *We need to relook at and revise the curriculum. One of the biggest things for me is that students struggle with reading and writing and I just feel that we do not spend enough time on that especially for 2nd language learners of English. So, we need at all of those structures; we need to determine*
> *a) we are targeting 2nd language students which would mean there'll be a different academic literacy programme for these learners than for 1st language students. That would mean a lot of work because we would have to determine who is 1st language and 2nd language. However, Students are a priority, so we cannot just pay lip service and say we have an academic literacy programme, yet it is largely meaningless.*

> *We must change some activities in the workbook to suit all types of ESL students. We need to source local (African and South African) materials. The workbook content of activities themselves presented a barrier in that topics given in the workbook were more for the people who came from urban areas than rural so conceptually the students from the rural areas would not necessarily understand discussions. For example, the ice breaker the game 'who loves pizza"'. Students who come from urban areas would enjoy the game because they know what pizza is. We used magazines like Time Magazines which did not speak to the socio-economic circumstances of our students. We need to bring local materials to class for discussions not just foreign. The content of these magazines to non-native speakers was complex. Build their knowledge from what they know to what they do not know.*

One lecturer, in particular, felt that there was not academic freedom to change anything in the curriculum and no opportunities to assist with the content or structure of the curriculum.

> *Sadly, in the current situation one would not have an input into this. We are not allowed academic freedom to engage in what has to be done or how it has to be done. It's a top down approach which hampers on the lecturer's creativity. There is no time to bring in effective new approaches to teaching academic literacy.*

It is important to involve as many staff as possible to engage in discussions and activities that will help with the design of the curriculum. Although there is no agreed definitive list of principles of curriculum design, a useful set of principles for anyone engaged in curriculum design is to strive towards producing a curriculum that is holistic, coherent, inclusive, accessible, student centred, one that

fosters a deep approach to learning, encouraging independence in learning and has links to research scholarship, based on feedback, evaluation and review. Getting to know the whole student's linguistic position and his/her educational and personal histories should help lecturers determine the familiarity with academic language in order to help inform how to create and present curriculum (De Klerk, 2002). Thus, a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching ESL students is bound to fail because students bring different linguistic and academic backgrounds to learning.

4.4 Conclusion

Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:101) suggest, "[t]he true test of a competent researcher comes in the analysis of the data, a process that requires analytical craftsmanship and the ability to capture understanding of the data in writing". In this chapter, the researcher has described the rationale that led to this study and the purpose and aims that guided it. It has also outlined the results of the data from questionnaires and interviews. Students have expressed what has worked or not for them in the curriculum. Lecturers have demonstrated flexibility in their classrooms to assist students to acquire academic skills. Lecturers have also shown that they have adopted inclusive and flexible approaches to instruction which recognise the diversity of the students in the classroom. Bennett (1990) has argued that teaching in multilingual classrooms requires a teacher to be fully aware of the differences between the students and to be flexible enough to cope with the conditions and situations which may be very different from those in linguistically homogenous classrooms.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I have presented the analysis and interpretation of data relating to the objectives of this study. Leedy (1993) explains that in the final part of a study, the researcher should ask him or herself the question, "What does it all mean?" The researcher should attempt to provide an interpretation of the findings in such a way that it can be understood by all. The study has to make connections with real-life situations so that the findings could be applicable to teaching and learning practices in the faculty.

This chapter presents conclusions and possible implications emanating from this study. Some suggestions are made on improving the course and the teaching and learning strategies to make the Language and Study Skills module more effective and responsive to the needs of first year academic literacy ESL students.

5.2 Conclusions

In accordance with the study conducted by Zamel and Spack (2006), the findings of this study demonstrate that the students enter university with varying degrees of linguistic proficiency together with multiple identities and life experiences. This notable diversity influences their processes of acquiring English language and knowledge of their discipline. As denoted in the opening chapter of this dissertation, this study set out to explore how, if at all, does an Academic Literacy curriculum accommodate the linguistic diversity of extended degree programme first year students at one South African University? In support of the main research question, three research sub-questions were posed to determine how, if at all, instructional strategies accommodate classroom linguistic diversity. These sub-questions were:

- What are the perceptions and experiences of students and lecturers on the accommodation of linguistic diversity in the Language and Study Skills curriculum?
- How, if at all, do instructional strategies accommodate classroom linguistic diversity?
- How do classroom instructional practices serve as either an impediment or an encouragement to the students' mastery of academic discourse practices?

The students, who were the focus of this study, had all been placed on an extended degree programme based on their Grade 12 maths and science results, that had placed them in the lowest percentile of students entering the university for science degrees. Accordingly, these students were labelled under-prepared for a degree in the sciences. With regard to the perceptions and experiences of students and lecturers on the accommodation of linguistic diversity in the Language and Study Skills curriculum, this study made several findings. Student respondents recognise the value provided by the Language and Study Skills module, acknowledging that it equips them with the academic literacies they need to succeed academically. However, there were others who did not see the value added by Language and Study Skills in their academic success. These students cannot be ignored, as Bennett (1990) highlights that all students in multilingual classrooms must benefit. Some students claimed that reading improved both vocabulary and spelling even though their writing on the completed questionnaires suggested otherwise. Most lecturers, however, thought the linguistically diverse students were not accommodated by the module.

What emerged from the study regarding the question of whether instructional strategies accommodate classroom linguistic diversity, was that lecturers understand the nature of the linguistic diversity in their classrooms. This study reveals a range in lecturers' attitudes towards linguistic diversity in their classrooms. Lecturers revert to their own coping mechanisms in trying to address the communicative challenges posed by use in education of languages not yet mastered by their learners. This study indicates that the development of academic literacy skills in multilingual classrooms is faced by numerous barriers, some systemic, others linguistic and still others may be pedagogical. Lecturers did not use the word “CALP” specifically in their responses but demonstrated an understanding of the main ideas behind CALP while discussing specific classroom strategies. Lecturers discussed the ways in which group work, visuals, scaffolding and other means support the development of literacy skills. Although the lecturers did not use the BICS/CALP terms to describe these activities, the ideas were represented in their statements.

The study was also interested in finding out the strategies participating lecturers used to handle linguistically diverse students in their classrooms, and how these classroom instructional practices serve as either an impediment or an encouragement to the students’ mastery of academic discourse practices. This study indicates that the development of academic literacy skills in ESL classrooms is not an easy feat for students, and assisting students to reach the goal of academic competence is just as complex. It further indicates that although lecturers were aware of the linguistic differences among their students, and tried through certain strategies to assist them, the curriculum does not necessarily make enough provision for ESL students. The strategies they use to manage the diversity of languages

among students could, therefore, be said to be their own mechanisms of coping with the linguistic demands of this module. Each lecturer has developed his/her own coping strategies for managing the communicative challenges posed by ESL students. One of the strategies used in the classroom was group work because that is how the curriculum is set up. Some lecturers used the students' first language to address barriers, some form of scaffolding and some forms of participation strategies.

The findings of this study point to the need for revising and restructuring the curriculum to consciously include aspects of ESL language learning as most lecturers pointed out. In addition, more research on the topic of ESL teaching by those involved in the module may help improve the module for the greater benefit of ESL students. A systematic investigation of practice will likely expose lecturers to issues of language learning and teaching that would encourage their reflections on own practices in order to improve teaching and learning.

5.3 Possible Implications

5.3.1 Implications for theory

Several factors generally considered essential for understanding how ESL students acquire academic literacy and strategies to help their competence were presented. This study sought to document and help teachers understand the phenomenon of multilingualism in education and how to capitalise on its potential as a resource to enable them to manage multilingual learning environments more effectively. The responses of the lecturers on how they deal with diverse students correspond with the findings of the study by Kennedy and Dewar (1997), who found that educators learn to cope in multilingual classrooms through trial and error. Educators try a variety of strategies to see what works. Even when those strategies work, the fact that they are own innovations seem to leave them uncertain that theirs are good enough strategies (Bloch, 2002). The findings in this study confirm those of earlier studies that have shown that lecturers seem to cope differently in dealing with linguistically diverse students. As suggested by most lecturers, a change in the curriculum derives from the current theory of academic literacy for ESL students.

Some concepts, such as trans-languaging as discussed above are opening 'ideological and implementation spaces' (Hornberger 2002: 27). They are deepening our understanding of multilingualism, the ideologies that underpin the different faces of multilingualism, and most importantly, how these could support theory further. The themes that emerged from this study, as discussed in the previous chapter, are of significance in this study because they confirm that academic writing still poses challenges to first-year ESL students and that the curriculum could play a role in addressing these challenges.

This study has shed light on the phenomenon of linguistic diversity in the Language and Study Skills classroom context. It also advocates the approach to teaching ESL students outlined by Lucas (2011). Lucas promotes the practice of scaffolding in the classroom to make content more accessible for ESL students (see section 2.4.6).

5.3.2 Implications for policy

Attitudes of the different stakeholders have been said to play a leading role in both the formulation and implementation of language-in-education policies. Some scholars argue that the success of a language policy is dependent on attitudes to the language prescribed for use (Lewis, 1981). Lewis (1981), for example, contends that policy for language-in-education must take account of the attitude of those likely to be affected. It is clear from Lewis' argument that all stakeholders in education play a role in the implementation of a language-in-education policy. As English is the dominant medium of instruction at the university where this study took place, it is important that ESL students are given optimal support to succeed in their studies. It would probably be beneficial for students to continue with academic literacy activities beyond the first year. Academic literacy teaching is mainly conceptualised as a process of inducting new students into their chosen disciplinary discourses; however, such development, for many students, cannot fully happen by the end of the first year of study.

Willis and Harris (2000:72) questioned whether academic literacy curricula adequately address the multiple challenges that ESL students face. These challenges could be worse if educators do not have adequate qualifications to teach ESL students. Although lecturer qualifications in teaching academic literacy were not within the scope of this study, lecturers who are not qualified to teach academic literacy to ESL students would need significant professional development to gain a full understanding of second language acquisition theory.

5.3.3 Implications for practice

This study has shown that lecturers are aware of the linguistic diversity that exists in their classrooms. The suggestion is for them to plan teaching that is more strategic for content learning that will benefit an entire classroom of students. Implications for practice include revisions to ESL programme curriculum to incorporate assignments that allow students to build upon their private literacy practices, the addition of more comprehensive writing tasks and more lexically challenging reading tasks. Additionally, lecturers should conduct research to fully meet literacy needs of the institution's specific student population.

Much scholarly reflection has been published on teaching and learning in an environment where

students from different language communities are taught in one classroom. Clauss-Ehlers (2006:158) points out that "teaching in multicultural classrooms requires a high level of expertise among teachers". This is because linguistically diverse students may have prior learning experiences (linguistic or otherwise) that predispose them to learning in ways that may not be compatible with some methods of instruction in common use in the classroom. As a result, lecturers need to be cognisant of how best to facilitate effective collaborative learning environments.

One learning strategy that was found to be beneficial in the classroom, for both students and lecturers, is group work. However, lecturers need to purposefully group their students to maximise group benefits. This strategy encourages students to think and develop effective strategies to negotiate meaning and manipulate ideas. Also, group dynamics will form an integral part of their future lives as they will likely transfer the skills they learn to their workplaces. Jacob and Mattson (1990), in their study of group work, found that cooperative learning resulted in increased language proficiency, improved academic achievement and improved social relations among students. In line with their findings, students have echoed that, because of working in groups, their participation in the classroom had increased. Purposeful grouping allows educators to provide personalised instruction in the general education setting.

Lecturers are encouraged to recognise and take responsibility for the regular presence of second language writers in their classes, understand their characteristics and develop instructional practices that are sensitive to their linguistic needs. It is also suggested that lecturers research their local ESL populations to best support their learning as suggested by Krashen (2003). In addition, lecturers should consider the linguistic demands of academic texts and tasks to determine how to modify English to make it comprehensive and appropriately challenging these students. Academic literacy lecturers should redesign academic development curricula in such a way that they are more responsive to the needs of students (Pineteh, 2013). The curriculum should create space for intensive academic reading and writing activities which allow for experimentation with different writing challenges. These activities should promote and encourage critical self-reflection on academic reading and writing exercises (Fernsten & Reda, 2011). Lecturers should focus more on a continuous developmental process, which orients students into the academic culture of reading and writing. Here, lecturers should attempt to re-ignite the culture of reading in students through exposure to different academic and non-academic texts. This will perhaps revitalise their confidence and minimise the ethos of ‘writing to pass’ which perpetually puts tremendous pressure on students and ultimately increases the amount of plagiarism in academic writing (Fernsten & Reda, 2011).

The university should market and make its reading and writing centres more visible to students on all

campuses. Literature on writing centres such as Archer (2010) and Leibowitz, Goodman, Hannon & Pakerson (1997) advocate the strategic roles of a writing centre in the process of academic development. One of these roles is the one-on-one consultation with students which "has been used to provide feedback to departments around the ways in which their students are grappling with particular tasks" (Archer, 2010:503).

On a long-term basis, students should be orientated to take ownership of their own learning process, ensuring that they prepare adequately for academic tasks and understand the role of academic literacy in their success. For students to take this leadership role, they should be mentored by lecturers, especially since their levels of cognitive development are still low. The central challenge is therefore to design curricula and curriculum structures as well as pedagogical approaches that will enable these students to unlock their potential (Scott, 2013).

5.3.4 Implications for further research

Language plays a key role in the life of the classroom in that educators use language to "create space to respond, relate and analyse the verbalisations that the individual reveals" (Clauss-Ehlers, 2006:67). More research is needed in relation to the language practices in multilingual classrooms contexts. It would be interesting to investigate the classroom practices of other academic literacy modules at this particular university to identify how other lecturers deal with the linguistic diversity of their students. Such research would further make suggestions for better inclusive strategies and help lecturers equip their students with stronger academic literacy skills. Decolonisation of education was one of the limitations of this study; however, there may be room for further investigation for future studies.

5.4 Conclusion

Language is integral to almost all human endeavours (De Jong & Harper, 2013). Multilingual classrooms have become the norm rather than the exception in many universities in South Africa. The findings in this study highlight the intricacies of the students' academic literacies which entail a variety of activities. The findings provide insights into the students' and lecturers' perceptions of the accommodation of academic literacy in the Language and Study Skills classroom. Overall, the study shows that as much as lecturers, undoubtedly, do their best in teaching ESL students, more work still needs to be done in this area. Students need exposure to more multimodal reading and writing activities while their needs as ESL students are borne in mind. The aim of the curriculum should be to empower students to become successful students who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve; create confident individuals who can live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives; and finally emerge as responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society. Scott (2013), befittingly, maintains that curriculum structure which includes basic parameters such as the starting point, expected rate of

progress, progression paths and exit standards of a programme is so embedded in the system that it is seldom examined. In developing countries, where far-reaching changes have occurred in the nature of the student intake, he contends that the appropriateness of current curriculum parameters for contemporary conditions needs to be reviewed.

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APPENDICES

A.1: Ethical approval from Stellenbosch University

Approval Notice

New Application

29-Mar-2016

Leso, Magdalene

Proposal #: SU-HSD-002051

Title: Diversity in an Academic Literacy Curriculum: a case of first-year BSc Extended Degree Programme students at a South African university

Dear Miss Magdalene Leso,

Your New Application received on 10-Mar-2016, was reviewed

Please note the following information about your approved research proposal: Proposal Approval Period: 29-Mar-2016 -28-Mar-2017

General comments:

The REC wishes to bring the comments of the DESC to the attention of the researcher regarding:

1. The use of academic assistants in handing out and taking in the self-administered questionnaires as it relates to the protection of the participants privacy.

2. Address the possible conflict of interest.

The researcher should address the DESC's comments as contained in the DESC's report to the satisfaction of the supervisor. Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines. Please remember to use your proposal number (SU-HSD-002051) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal. Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary). This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit. National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 218089183.

Included Documents: DESC Report

REC: Humanities New Application

Sincerely, Clarissa Graham, REC Coordinator, Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

A.2 Ethical approval from the University of Pretoria

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Denkleiers • Leading Minds • Dikgopolo tša Dihlalefi

OFFICE OF THE DEAN
Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

02 October 2015

Ms Tshidi Leso
Mamelodi Campus
University of Pretoria

Email: tshidi.leso@up.ac.za

Dear Ms Leso

Permission to conduct Research at the University of Pretoria

With reference to the above, kindly note that permission is hereby granted for you to conduct your research with the students and staff members of the University of Pretoria as your participants for the study of your Master's degree through the University of Stellenbosch.

Thank you

Sincerely

Professor Brenda Wingfield
Deputy Dean
Post Graduate and Research Studies

Office of the Dean
University of Pretoria
Pretoria 0002 South Africa

Tel Number: +27 (0)12 420 3201
Fax Number: +27 (0)12 420 5441

Email address:dean.nas@up.ac.za
www.up.ac.za

A.3 Information and consent sheet

UNIVERSITEIT•STELLENBOSCH•UNIVERSITY
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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Diversity in an Academic Literacy Curriculum: A Case of First-year BSC Extended Degree Programme Students at a South African University

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Tshidi Leso who is currently completing a Masters degree in Education and Training for Lifelong Learning in the Department of Curriculum Studies at Stellenbosch University. The results of my study will be contributed to a dissertation. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a Language and Study Skills lecturer in the NAS Extended Programme.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to see whether second language speakers of English are accommodated in the Language and Study Skills (LST) curriculum.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I would ask you to do the following things: Participate in an interview that will probably take about an hour to complete. This interview will be conducted at a time and place that suit you and will will include questions about your day-to-day classroom activities and the LST curriculum. The interview will be audio-taped and the tape recording will be transcribed for the purposes of analysing what was said.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The only potential inconvenience or risk to you will be the time that you may be asked to make available for the interview and the fact that you will be asked to share your experiences in the programme.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Participating in the interview should lead you to reflect on the LST curriculum, as a lecturer, and perhaps improve the experience of second language speakers of English if there is a need.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no payment for participation in this study.

6.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means and the records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report that is made public participants' names will not be included or any information that will make it possible to identify them. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your current or future relationship with Cornell University. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

7. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have questions later, you may contact Tshidi Leso at tshidiln3@gmail.com.

8. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me by _____ [*name of relevant person]* in _____ [*Afrikaans/English/Xhosa/other]* and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of Subject/Participant

_____

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

_____ _____

Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative **Date**

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the subject/participant]* and/or [his/her] representative _____ [*name of the representative]. [H*e/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [*Afrikaans/*English/*Xhosa/*Other*] and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into* _____ by _____].

_____ _____

Signature of Investigator **Date**

A.4 Interview Schedule

Title of Research	Language Diversity in an Academic Literacy Curriculum: A Case of First-Year BSC Extended Degree Programme Students at a South African University
Name of Researcher	Tshidi Leso
Institution	Stellenbosch University
Department	Curriculum Studies
Supervisor	Dr L. Frick
Contact Details	Tshidi.leso@up.ac.za or tshidiln3@gmail.com
Date of Interview	April/May 2016
Interviwee	

1. Introduction

Firstly, I would like to thank you for taking the time to do this interview. I will be interviewing you on your experiences, observations and opinions of linguistically diverse English Second Language (ESL) students in your classroom. The aim is to determine whether linguistically diverse students are accommodated in the curriculum. It is not a test of your knowledge or competence in any way. It is voluntary and your identity will be protected for confidentiality purposes. With your permission, I will record this interview and also take notes to make sure that I do not miss any key information. You may withdraw from the research at any stage.

The interview will be an informal and open discussion and I will be asking questions that will enable us to cover salient areas. This interview should take no more than an hour of your time.

2. Questions

2.1 As we are colleagues, I know our classes are composed of linguistically diverse students (students whose first language is not English). In what ways do the ESL students meet the objectives of the programme, or not?

2.2 What distinct barriers, if any, have you noticed that students encounter in the programme?

2.3 How, if at all, do you deal with these barriers?

2.3 What teaching strategies, if any, do you employ to enhance the learning experience of these students?

2.5 What activities, if any, have been specifically developed for ESL students in the curriculum?

2.6 How have these activities enhanced the learning of ESL students?

2.7 What other experiences, observations or opinions, if any, regarding ESL students would you like to share with me?

A.5 Student Questionnaire

Curriculum Diversity Student Questionnaire

Dear Student

I am a Masters student at Stellenbosch University and I am interested in researching linguistic diversity in the Language and Study Skills (LST) classroom. My topic is 'Diversity in an academic literacy curriculum: a case of first-year extended degree programme at a South African university'. The aim of the following questionnaire is to determine whether the LST curriculum accommodates the linguistic diversity of their students. Curriculum refers to academic content, materials, teaching methods and assessment practices. It should take you approximately 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Please ensure that you answer on the answer sheet. Your responses will remain confidential. The questionnaire requires no identifying information. Should you choose not to participate during the process, this will not be held against you in any way.

The data you provide will be used for research purposes only as part of my project and for no other purpose. The final report produced will be written in such a way that it will not be possible to identify individual participants.

Thank you for taking part in the research project.

Please do not write your name on the questionnaire to ensure the confidentiality of your responses. Please answer the questions truthfully. There are no right or wrong answers.

Tshidi Leso

Survey Questionnaire

Diversity in the Language and Study Skills Curriculum

Section A: General Information (Please √ the correct response)

A. 1 Gender

[ ] Male [ ] Female

A. 2 Age

[ ] 18-22 [ ] 23-26

A. 3 Home Language

[ ] English [ ] Afrikaans [ ] IsiZulu [ ] Sesotho [ ] Other

A.3 Race why do you need to know this – might be a sensitive question…

[ ] Black [ ] Coloured [ ] Indian [ ] White [ ] Other

Section B: Teaching and Learning Experiences

B.1 What does the term 'linguistic diversity' mean to you?

B.2 At the beginning of the semester, which classroom activities, if any, supported the development of your academic language?

B.3 Which Language and Study Skills library materials, if any, have enhanced your academic literacy skills?

B.4 How, if at all, have these library materials enhanced your academic literacy skills?

B.5 How has participation in the Language and Study Skills classroom influenced your performance in academic literacy?

B. 6 How, if at all, has your lecturer accommodated the linguistic diversity of students in the classroom?

Thank you for your time